

Ray Vensel  
Vice President, Maine Chapter of the Freedom from Religion Foundation  
LD 1382

Members of the Health and Human Services Committee, this is testimony AGAINST LD 1382.

The language of LD 1382 has several assumptions baked into the document which seem to be political statements rather than policies about public health. Many terms are not clearly defined, leaving plenty of room for abuse. Several sentences direct certain actions to be taken which are already taken, thus implying that currently they are not. Others use inflammatory language in a clearly political context. Apparently, one person's educated opinion and guidance is another's manipulation by fear and intimidation.

Also in this bill is the labeling of places of worship as essential. Doing this ensures that the next pandemic will be even more difficult to contain and solve because it will produce additional hot spots among some religious people and thus spread a deadly disease... and why? To favor the religious beliefs of one set of people over another set.

Government should not do that. Government has no realistic way to measure the sincerity of a claimed religious belief justifying an exemption from a rule which preserves public health. We don't have to try to gauge sincerity if we simply recognize the obvious fact that religious freedom has limits. "Sincerity" does not justify putting others at risk.

Please protect public health, and don't let this bill pass. Thank you.