

Senator Rafferty  
Representative Brennan  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs,

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the committee, y name is Jillian McLeod-Tardiff and I am writing today to urge you to support LD 254: An Act to Update the Sex Education and Consent Curriculum.

Growing up in the Maine public school system, I had a great sex ed teacher who made sure to include information about birth control, sexuality, pleasure and consent. This all helped me grow a vocabulary and understanding that helped me protect myself from pregnancy scares and sexual abuse later on - and when I did experience those things, I knew what it was and knew how to find help and talk about it.

My teacher had condoms in a bowl on her desk and had us practice putting them on wooden models that the students in wood shop made. It really normalized the use of condoms, while enforcing the importance of using protection.

While there our teachers did the best with the training & resource they had, if they had had access to more support & a wider range of information, there are vital topics we could have covered that we didn't. I wish we had learned more about how nonconsensual sexual activity and harassment isn't always like it's depicted in media. I wish we had learned more about how power and privilege impact sex and healthcare access. I wish our teacher gave us resources on where and how to access sexual and reproductive healthcare in Maine.

Comprehensive sex education ensures that people at all stages of life have the knowledge of how to have the best, most fulfilling sex lives while also preventing unintended outcomes like infections or pregnancy. Everyone would know what sexual assault and harassment are so that they know to always get consent, or what to do if they experience nonconsensual behavior.

LD 254 will ensure that all educators in Maine have access to inclusive, up-to-date curricula, adequate training, and support from experts in the field, meaning all young people in Maine will get access to the comprehensive sexuality education they deserve. Please vote "ought to pass" on this important bill.

Thank you for your time & attention,

Jillian McLeod-Tardiff  
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