

Christine Mardoian
Phippsburg
LD 492

Good Afternoon, esteemed members of the committee, lawmakers, and fellow citizens of Maine. My name is Christine Mardoian-Swett, and I stand before you today as a staunch advocate for LD 492, as a mother, a former social worker, and mother of a queer son and I come before you in support of a vital piece of legislation that would amend the Maine Constitution to explicitly recognize and protect the fundamental rights of parents to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children. I urge you to support this bill, not only as a matter of principle but as a necessary safeguard for the liberty and integrity of Maine families.

The relationship between parent and child is the bedrock of any civilized society. Yet, in an era of increasing governmental overreach and shifting societal norms, this sacred responsibility is too often challenged or undermined. LD 492 addresses this threat head-on by ensuring that parental rights are not merely implied but explicitly enshrined in our state's highest legal document.

This amendment is not about granting new powers to parents; it is about affirming what has always been theirs—a fundamental liberty to raise their children according to their values, beliefs, and understanding of what is right and good. Whether it's choosing the best educational path, making life altering medical decisions, or instilling moral and cultural traditions, parents must retain the authority to act without fear of unwarranted intrusion. LD 492 provides that assurance, establishing a clear constitutional boundary that respects the primacy of the family unit.

Opponents may argue that such an amendment is unnecessary, pointing to existing laws or judicial precedents. But history teaches us that rights left unwritten can too easily be eroded. By embedding parental rights in the Maine Constitution, we send a powerful message: these are not privileges to be granted or revoked at the whim of bureaucrats or courts—they are inalienable. This clarity will serve as a bulwark against future encroachments, protecting Maine families for generations to come.

Moreover, LD 492 aligns with the values that define our state—independence, community, and a deep respect for individual liberty. Maine has long prided itself on fostering a culture where people are trusted to govern their own lives. What could be more central to that ethos than empowering parents to govern the lives of their children? This bill is a reaffirmation of that trust, a recognition that no government entity, however well-intentioned, can replace the wisdom, love, and dedication of a healthy parent.

I ask you to consider the stakes. Without this amendment, we risk a creeping erosion of parental authority, where decisions once made at the kitchen table are instead dictated from afar. With LD 492, we take a stand for freedom, for family, and for the future of Maine's children. I respectfully urge this committee and the full Legislature to vote in favor of LD 492, ensuring that parental rights are not just a fleeting promise but a permanent pillar of our constitutional framework and it ought to pass.