



---

March 31, 2025

Re: LD 660, An Act to Provide Transparency and Public Access to Public School Curricula

To: Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

The Maine Chapter of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (MC-FFRF) testifies AGAINST LD 660 as written. It calls for “transparency”, but requiring public access to (or approval of) public school curricula can have unintended consequences, as it could undermine educational autonomy, discourage innovation, and create distractions from the task of educating students.

Autonomy is important for local school districts. They are responsible for designing curricula to meet the needs of their students while following state and federal standards. School boards, teachers, and education professionals should retain the flexibility to develop educational programs that reflect the needs and values of their communities.

If curricula were made fully transparent and publicly accessible the result could be a loss of autonomy for educators, who may be forced to tailor their methods to satisfy public opinion or to respond to politics rather than focus on the academic needs of the students. Curriculum decisions should be left to education professionals, who are best equipped to design and implement programs that promote student learning and growth.

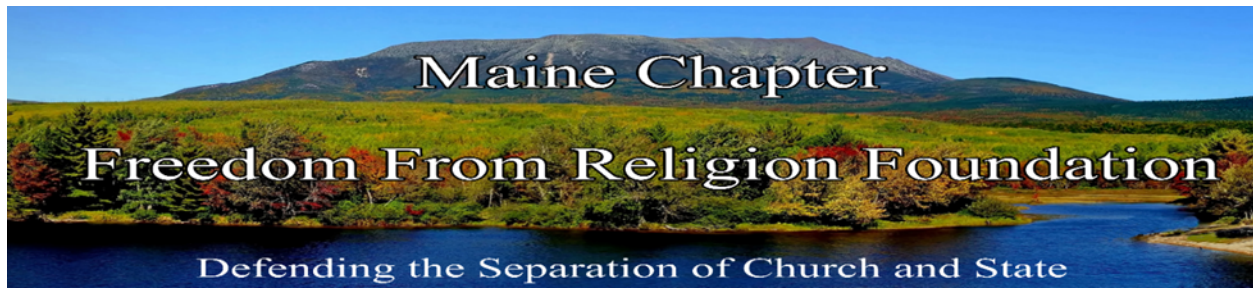
These “transparency” requirements could lead to bureaucratic delays and increased red tape as school officials are forced to review and revise curricula to ensure they meet approval from members of the community. This would divert time, energy, and resources from teaching and supporting students.

Teachers and school administrators need the freedom to investigate new teaching methods and ideas to meet the needs of a changing society. This kind of educational experimentation requires the ability to adjust curricula as needed. If public access to curricula were mandated, there would be a chilling effect on such innovation. To avoid public backlash, teachers might hesitate to try something new. Educational creativity would be stifled if every lesson plan were subjected to public scrutiny and approval. The educational process would become bogged down in debates over content instead of focusing on how best to inspire and educate students.

---

Maine Chapter, Freedom From Religion Foundation  
PO Box 161  
Vassalboro, ME 04989-0161

President.RV@ffrfmaine.org  
phone: 207-370-8813  
www.ffrfmaine.org



---

The volume of feedback and challenges from various community groups, parents, or political factions could lead to an overwhelming and distracting process. School administrators and teachers would be forced to navigate it rather than focus on the best interests of their students.

And of course there's political overreach. What is appropriate or valuable for students can vary significantly depending on cultural, religious, and personal beliefs. Public access to curricula can open the door for individuals and interest groups with specific political agendas to exert undue influence over the educational process. These parties could mount campaigns to influence what is taught in schools, even if their views are not reflective of the broader community's goals. For example, a group could pressure schools into removing or altering materials that it deems offensive. Curricula would be dictated by a vocal minority rather than by evidence-based educational practices and the expertise of educators. Politically driven attempts to alter curricula could lead to banning books, removing critical material on history or current events, or imposing ideologies that conflict with the principles of critical thinking and academic freedom.

Parents should be able to have their concerns addressed, but there are already parent-teacher conferences, school board meetings, and other forums for parental input. Requiring access to curricula as a blanket policy could overwhelm these systems and potentially create an adversarial relationship between parents and educators.

Most parents and community members are not equipped to fully evaluate an entire curriculum. They might focus on isolated incidents or small details of the curriculum that they find problematic or controversial. This could lead to misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the overall educational program. Conflict would ensue.

The requirements of LD 660 can have negative consequences that outweigh any benefits. Curriculum decisions should remain with educational professionals, and public access to curricula should be handled with care, ensuring reasonable access without creating an environment where political influence, misinformation, or conflict distract from the fundamental mission of education.

For these reasons, the MC-FFRF urges the committee to vote "Ought Not To Pass." Thank you for your time and consideration.

-Ray Vensel, President