

Janneke Strickland
FARMINGTON
LD 174

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

I strongly oppose LD 174 LD (An Act to Restore Religious Exemptions to Immunization Requirements) and LD 727 (An Act to Repeal Certain Immunization Requirements for Schools).

As a school nurse for 7 years and pediatric nurse for 24, one of my primary duties is to monitor students' vaccination status. Before our current immunization law was in effect, more than 10% of students were not fully vaccinated - below the level to provide herd immunity against many diseases. I fully supported the bill that eliminated religious and personal exemptions. A public referendum was overwhelmingly defeated by 72% of voters to uphold the law. In 2021, the law was finally implemented and vaccination rates improved. In 2024, the vaccination rate of Maine school children was 95% - one of the highest in the country.

There is currently a measles outbreak in 20 states around our country, in states as close to us as Vermont. Going backward on school vaccination requirements is not in the best interest of the health of our students and communities.

For these reasons, I oppose LD 174 and LD 727. I strongly urge you to do all you can to keep these bills from being passed!