

Marita Wiser
Bridgton
LD 174

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

I am in strong opposition to both 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 13 years, one of my responsibilities was monitoring student's vaccination compliance. Prior to our current immunization law, more than 10% of students were not fully vaccinated - below the level needed to provide herd immunity against many diseases. I fully supported the bill that eliminated religious and philosophical 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.

Currently we have a growing measles outbreak in 20 states. Going backward on school vaccination requirements would make Maine vulnerable to an outbreak.

For these reasons, I oppose LD 174 and LD 727.