

Jean Barbour
Falmouth
LD 174

Dear Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

I am in strong opposition to both LD 174 (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 over 23 years, one of my primary duties was to monitor the vaccination status of students. Prior to our current immunization law, more than 10% of students were not fully vaccinated which is below the level to provide her 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 there is a measles outbreak in 20 states due to people not being fully vaccinated. We need to protect the most vulnerable with compromised immune systems and those babies not old enough to be fully vaccinated.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose LD 174 and LD 727 and hope you vote to do the same.