

April 4, 2025

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

I oppose **LD 174** (*An Act to Restore Religious Exemptions to Immunization Requirements*) and **LD 727** (*An Act to Repeal Certain Immunization Requirements for Schools*). These bills will weaken Maine's school immunization laws and pose increased risks to the health of Maine's communities.

As a pediatric nurse, I have dedicated my career to caring for our youngest and most vulnerable population. Immunizations are crucial to children's health, protecting them from preventable and debilitating diseases. I have been a public school nurse for the past 5 years, and one of my primary duties is monitoring the immunization status of students in my school.

During the 2023-2024 school year, 97% of students entering kindergarten and 7th grade were fully vaccinated. That rate rose to 98% for students entering 12th grade. K-12 schools in Maine have exceeded the 95% vaccination threshold recommended to achieve "herd immunity" for the first time since 2011, and our state has one of the highest school-aged vaccination rates in the country.

As of March 27, 2025, jurisdictions in 20 states have reported confirmed cases of measles; 75% of those 483 cases have affected unvaccinated children under the age of 19. Measles, a vaccine-preventable infectious disease, is extremely contagious and cases multiply rapidly in outbreak areas. We cannot risk the health of our students and communities by repealing Maine immunization laws.

I urge you to vote against **LD 174** and **LD 727** (which is exceptionally vague) to protect the health and well-being of all Mainers.

Thank you,

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