

Caroline Carrigan

Isle au Haut

LD 174

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

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

An excerpt from *'The Vaccine Book; making the right decision for your child'* by Robert W. Sears, MD:

“Whichever choice you make (to vaccinate or not), there’s risk. Many patients have told me they simply feel more comfortable accepting disease risk than the risk posed by vaccines. A common criticism of these families is that they are putting the rest of the nation in danger by not vaccinating. This criticism comes mostly from ignorance – ignorance of how most vaccines work and ignorance about how diseases are spread. There is a misconception that all vaccines prevent the spread of their diseases and that every disease will come back if we stop vaccinating, and those who push mandatory vaccination policies build their platforms on this misinformation. But the simple, scientific truth is that most of the vaccines don’t work that way. With our modern standards of living (sanitation, nutrition, and medical care), those who can’t or don’t vaccinate pose little to no risk to our nation’s health.

Ever wonder why the topic of vaccines is so polarizing? I have learned that the vast majority of people are middle ground when it comes to vaccination. They vaccinate or they don’t, but they don’t buy into the fear or prejudice that those on either fringe side of this issue are trying to sell them. The middle ground knows that there hasn’t been any increase in any vaccine-preventable diseases in decades. They know that vaccines can cause serious side effects in some people, so it’s unethical to force them on anybody. They don’t listen to the pro-mandate fringe, who use every opportunity, and their vast financial resources, to spread fear of disease and denial of any negative effects of vaccination to push their agenda.

The reality is that most of us are middle-ground, and we aren’t trying to force our ideas on anybody. We view it as a medical choice that everybody gets to make for themselves and their children, and we can all live, learn, work, and play together regardless. We don’t discriminate based on the personal, religious, and scientific decisions people make about their medical care.

Yet, I have seen ignorance and fear steer some people toward a mob mentality that makes them forget all about being human. Families exclude unvaccinated kids from gatherings,

which makes no sense because all adults are effectively unvaccinated (their shots have mostly worn off). I have seen friends and neighbors part ways because an unvaccinated child is deemed unsafe. More doctor's offices no longer allow unvaccinated children through their doors, even if only opting out of one vaccine. Now schools are starting to exclude those people as well. What's next? Restaurants? Amusement parks? Grocery stores? Will people have to show their vaccine papers just to go out in public? The very idea may sound ludicrous to you now, but that's what happens when one group decides there's only one right decision about something and those who don't make the right decision no longer have equal rights." - Robert W. Sears, MD

In final, if safety studies were done properly, it would quickly become clear that vaccines are causing significant harm. Vaccine injuries are real, and they are life changing. Informed consent means being given all the information, but it also means that no one tells you what to do. No one else should be making decisions about what is best for you and children – not your child's doctor, not your school system, and especially not the government. Use all or some of the vaccines, or don't vaccinate – but don't take away our children's rights to access childcare programs, or public and private education. This is extremely limiting to Maine's children and their families. Many of whom who live in remote and rural towns, with fewer opportunities and resources in proximity to where they live.

Thank you,

Caroline Carrigan, Mother

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