

Marina Penalver  
Peaks Island  
LD 174

Please Oppose LD 174 – Protect Maine’s Vaccine Law

Dear Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Public Affairs,

I’m writing to urge you to vote NO on LD 174. This bill would weaken Maine’s strong vaccine law, which helps keep our children, schools, businesses, and healthcare centers safe from preventable diseases.

I have taught 7th and 8th grade science for 25 years in Portland public schools. I currently care for my 88-year old mother at home as she is being treated for cancer. My health, my mother's health, and my students' vaccination status are inextricably linked. Current vaccination laws reassure me that the students in my classroom will not be introducing the threat of highly contagious and dangerous diseases like diphtheria, rubella or measles. If a student's family refuses to vaccinate, that choice impacts everyone that who interacts with their child, and beyond. As a teacher, I have no way of knowing which child's vaccination status might harm me or my loved ones. Vaccines aren’t just a personal decision—they are a public health responsibility. As a Mainer, and a state employee, I want our state to continue following science and protecting all children as well as those who live and work with them.

LD 174 would bring back non-medical exemptions. This change would leave our communities vulnerable to outbreaks of disease, threatening lives and our state’s economy. We’re already seeing surges in diseases like measles in states with weaker laws. Maine shouldn’t be next.

I beg you to stand up for public health, our schools, and the will of Maine voters, who overwhelmingly upheld the vaccine law at the ballot box in 2020 with a majority in every county.

Vote “Ought Not to Pass” on LD 174.