

Stephen Shannon
Biddeford
LD 727

April 6, 2025

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

I write to express my 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), because I care for the health of all our children.

I offer three perspectives:

(1) I am a physician trained in family and preventive medicine who practiced in the Maine until I became dean at the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine (1995-2006). I know the science, I taught public health, and I am aware of the danger to a population without herd immunity—overwhelming immunizations against diseases—especially measles. There is no scientific evidence linking the MMR vaccine to autism. That has been demonstrated in many studies in many places. It is unethical to allow parents to expose their children (and the children of others) to deadly diseases because of their own beliefs. Only medical contraindications should prevent immunizations.

(2) I am a grandfather of 3 young granddaughters (5, 8 and 13) who live and attend public schools in southern Maine. I think about their health all the time—and the health of their friends and classmates. Vaccinations should be required for all children in our community, unless medically contraindicated.

(3) I am old enough to have gotten measles in the pre-vaccine days when I was 8 or 9 years old. I developed pneumonia and nearly died. I was visited daily by our family doctor who treated me at home.

Measles and other vaccine preventable diseases can be deadly or disable children for life. We need to protect our community from them.

Thank you,

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