

Testimony in OPPOSITION to LD 174 and LD 727
Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

April 7, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

My name is Melissa Keepert, and I am a pediatrician and a parent of 3 kids. I'd like to express my strong opposition to LD 174 and LD 727.

In 2019, Maine passed one of the strongest vaccine laws in the country with overwhelming bipartisan support. Since then, our rates of nonmedical exemptions have dropped dramatically, from 6.2% in 2019 to 0.9% today. This means that more children are protected, and more schools are safer from outbreaks. This law was passed because Mainers recognized that science, not misinformation, should guide public health policy.

Across the country, vaccine-preventable diseases like measles are surging again—including outbreaks in states where exemption rates are high and vaccination laws are weak. At the same time, public health infrastructure is underfunded and stretched thin. Now is not the time to create more risk.

As a practicing community pediatrician, I frequently hear families confused by the increasing false information online and in the media that vaccines cause autism, infertility and various other medical conditions. This law prevents the community from falling prey to misinformation.

Schools, daycares, and healthcare facilities rely on high vaccination rates to keep vulnerable people safe—like newborns, elderly people, and those who can't be vaccinated for medical reasons (such as cancer treatment). Repealing vaccine requirements would shift the burden onto these vulnerable groups and the people who care for them.

I respectfully urge you to vote "Ought Not to Pass" on these bills. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Melissa Keepert, BA, MA, MD
Pediatrician
Damariscotta, ME