



April 7, 2025

Chairpersons Rafferty and Murphy, Senators Libby and Pierce, and Representatives Bagshaw, Brennan, Carlow, Crockett, Dodge, Haggan, Lyman, Mitchell, and Sargent:

My name is Christine Dyke and I am the Lead Minister of First Parish Congregational Church, UCC, in Gorham. I am speaking in opposition to LD174 and LD727, both regarding vaccines.

As a leader and member in a mainline Protestant denomination, I am opposed to using religious beliefs in a way that endangers both the person and others. The diminishing of science by religion is not supported by the faith that I and most Christians practice. Instead, we are asked to care for our neighbors, especially those in need. Participating in highly researched vaccine programs is a part of that care. An exemption for a medical issue is certainly supported, and as a person of faith, it is my responsibility to then do what I can so that others with medical issues can flourish.

Christian faith is lived out as a caring community and participating in a vaccine program so that “herd immunity” can occur, is a faithful response. I regularly remind my congregation to get their yearly vaccines and listen to the stories of the children who have been to the doctor to “get their shots.”

The use of faith, and particularly Christian faith to say that we have no responsibility toward our neighbor, is a misreading of our most central texts and beliefs. As a congregation of faithful people, we ask that you do not support LD174 and LD727.

Thank you,

Rev. Christine F. Dyke
Lead Minister
First Parish Congregational Church, UCC