



Testimony in Support of LD 1881:

“An Act to Ensure the Rights of Parents of Minor Children in Education”

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Harris Van Pate, and I serve as policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute. Maine Policy is a free-market think tank, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony supporting LD 1881, “An Act to Ensure the Rights of Parents of Minor Children in Education.”

LD 1881 recognizes a principle that should be beyond dispute: parents, not government institutions, are the primary decision-makers in their children's lives. This legislation affirms the rights of parents to access vital information about their child's education and well-being, and to actively participate in decisions that affect their development and future.

In recent years, Maine and other states have witnessed a troubling trend—school policies and administrative directives that withhold sensitive information about students from parents. Whether under the guise of privacy or expedience, this practice undermines trust between parents and schools and potentially jeopardizes the health, safety, and educational outcomes of Maine’s children. LD 1881 provides a commonsense safeguard to ensure parents are not sidelined in their children's lives at school.

The bill advances transparency by guaranteeing access to instructional materials, including content used in virtual learning. It ensures that parents are informed before the administration of health screenings and questionnaires, and affirms their right to review all school-based mental and physical health services offered to their child. These are foundational rights—nothing in this legislation burdens schools beyond the expectation of honest communication and respect for parental authority.

Furthermore, this legislation wisely includes an exception for cases where disclosure might result in abuse, neglect, or abandonment, thereby preserving necessary protections for children in potentially dangerous home environments. In doing so, LD 1881 strikes a balance between safeguarding children's welfare and preserving parents' constitutional rights.

Public education should be a partnership between families and schools, not a substitute for the role of the parent. This bill restores that partnership by placing parents where they belong—at the center of their child’s education. In line with Maine Policy Institute’s advocacy for transparency, individual rights, and limited government, we see LD 1881 as a vital step in restoring trust and accountability in Maine’s education system.



For these reasons, we urge the committee to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 1881. Thank you for your time and consideration.