

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and all committee members-

My name is Jessie Boda. I am a registered nurse and the local director for a classical Christian education mission.

I hope and pray that my testimony today compels you to vote "ought to pass" for LD 51 because LD 798 has cost my family and our great state dearly.

LD 798 cost me my Nursing job. I worked faithfully with those suffering from mental illness and drug-addiction at St. Mary's for over 12 years. My husband has had to come out of retirement. We have little savings left. I am waitressing.

LD 798 cost my 11-year-old son the ability to attend Maine summer camps, colleges and universities or participate in public and private school activities.

My husband and I have counted the cost and held fast to our convictions regarding vaccines. Why? Because our convictions are solidly grounded in our faith in Jesus Christ- not the quicksand of expert opinion and government coercion. LD 798 has cost our family much, but it will not cost us our health or our God-given consciences.

Because of LD 798, friends have left Maine to nurse elsewhere or have left Nursing altogether. A young man in my church was fired as an EMT. A young Nursing student told me just this week that if the law doesn't change, she will pursue a different career. This is what LD 798 has cost our healthcare system. Are you okay with this?

Interest in my homeschool organization has skyrocketed. As I interview new families, I hear remarkably similar stories- the government mandates have opened their eyes. They've suffered the consequences of LD 798. They are taking back control of their children's education and healthcare choices and making great sacrifices to do so.

Another local homeschool group has a 2-year waiting list. Our local gymnastics studio has added 5 homeschool classes. Homeschool sports leagues are forming.

I believe these families are better off home-educating but I'm furious at how they arrived- they felt they had no choice. Are you okay with an educational system that is hostile to certain people groups? What about inclusivity?

I leave you with a quote by Martin Luther, the Father of the Protestant Reformation:

"Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason, I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other- my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe (nor effective, I would add). Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen."