

LD 51 - An Act to Restore Religious and Philosophical Exemptions to Immunization Requirements. PASS this ACT NOW!

Good morning Honorable members of the education and cultural affairs committee. My name is Elizabeth Chang and I live in Union. I am testifying today in SUPPORT of LD 51.

As a Christian who grew up in Maine, I consider myself blessed not only to live in a country that protects my God-given right to religious liberty, but also to live in a beautiful small-town state like Maine. There truly is no other place that compares to Maine. I have had the opportunity to travel to numerous other states as well as impoverished cities and third-world nations. I have seen citizens of these severely impoverished places struggle not only to put food on the table, but with a crippling fear of being persecuted or ostracized from the communities in which they live due to their closely held beliefs. I especially came to value our state and freedoms upon returning from these eye-opening trips.

The past couple of years have broken my heart as Maine has come under a heaviness from mandates and ACTS that has crippled our citizens, particularly individuals and families in our churches. As a leader in my home church, I watched week after week the onset of oppressive, unnecessary mandates as individuals faced the devastating reality between a choice to hold fast to their sincerely held religious beliefs, or access to necessary services; specifically to education and health care - and for many even jobs!

These experiences bring me back to my time traveling in Nicaragua; a third-world country, where I observed a deep oppression on the citizens who did not know where their next meal was coming from. Even though we do not often see this kind of poverty on the physical level here in Maine, the past few years I have seen the same kind of oppression on the faces and spirits of our citizens, especially those with religious beliefs in regards to these vaccines.

Like numerous other families and individuals, I myself am facing tough decisions about how to continue to live in a state that has such heavy mandates. My hope is to see Maine restored and to be able to raise my family here in freedom like I remember having as a child. As a Christian, Mainer, homeschool mom, church leader & wife to a worker at a Maine mental health organization: I implore you to support this act for the future of Maine!

Restore religious freedom in Maine

Elizabeth Chang

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