

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Cultural and Educational Affairs Committee, I am asking you to vote ought to pass on LD51.

My name is Kimberly Hutchinson and I'm from Windsor Maine. I'm the mom of 3 amazing daughters with distinguished school careers. The two oldest received the Secretary of State award in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, both are members of the National Honor Society, earning high honors each semester, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> is working hard to follow her sisters legacy's. The oldest is an Architecture major and an Art minor at Norwich University in VT. The second will attend CMCC this fall for Architecture and Design. The youngest will finally arrive at the halls of Erskine Academy to begin her high school career in September. So why am I here?

My daughters were able to obtain medical exemptions and continue on with their schooling. I'm here because several of their friends were not. I vividly remember days before getting the exemptions when I held them as they cried fearing they would be torn from their school, their sports, their clubs, their friends, their teachers, the hallways that they called home. At Erskine we bleed blue. Go Eagles! The uncertainty of their futures, ones they had mapped out since they were little, became unbearable for them to think about losing. How does one explain getting kicked out of school to their overachieving child? How do they explain it to their friends?

I'm here because as a school board member I saw enrollment dropping as families were forced to homeschool. Families who were forced to choose between teaching their children or going to work. LD798 left families without a safety net during a volatile time in our history.

I'm here because we have lost the right to informed consent and bodily autonomy. Forced to choose between an education and medical coercion.

I'm here because I need to ask you to vote ought to pass on LD51 to restore the rights of children and parents. The right to receive an education without having to violate their religious and philosophical beliefs. A healing desperately needs to happen in this state and this is where it can start. Thank you for your time.