

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is David Whitney and I'm testifying in favor of LD's 51, 869, 1098, 1148, 1209, and 1228.

Society deems it reprehensible to discriminate against marginalized groups. Passed in 2019, LD798 is the most discriminatory and punitive law ever passed in the state of Maine. It's passage has forced thousands to leave our schools, businesses, and Maine.

I'm a 4th generation business owner in Machias. I'm past Board of Trustees chair at Downeast Community hospital. I'm a high school soccer coach. I've been married to my wife, Holly for 24 years.

Our daughter, Michon, graduated from Washington Academy in 2020. With a 4.2 GPA, National Honor Society member, and several merit scholarships, Michon chose to attend UNH where she is a Paul Scholar and a Residential assistant. Michon is missing two doses from the vaccine schedule, which excluded her from my alma mater, University of Maine. This winter, we attended a UNH V UMaine Hockey game at which I wore a shirt which read: UNH Dad, UMaine Grad: What's a dad to do?

A recent Bangor Daily News article detailed the precipitous decline in enrollment at the University of Maine system. In the article, Ryan Low, UMaine system CFO, painted a grim financial picture with gaps totaling \$11.4 million. Enrollment is short by over 1,000 students. If my daughter's example is any indication, I believe that LD 798 has had and will continue to have a direct and negative impact on enrollment at U Maine system.

As a 7-year school Soccer coach, I have never been asked my vaccination status. If LD 798 had dragged in teachers and faculty, it likely wouldn't have passed because of the Maine State Teachers Union.

Hospitals are suffering with a lack of healthcare workers because of the Covid vaccine mandate. Recently I was asked if I would again consider applying for a board seat at Downeast Community Hospital. I declined the invitation because I don't want any part of a vaccine mandate. Its unfortunate that a past board chair with 10 years of board experience declined to avoid discrimination.

In closing, with over 96% of school children being current with the childhood vaccination schedule prior to LD798 being introduced, there was never an under-vaccination issue of Maine's Youth. Please vote yes on each of these bills. Halt discrimination.

Thank you.

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