

Senator Rafferty, Representative Breenan, esteemed members of the Committee of Education and Cultural Affairs.

I am Kathleen Szostek, born and raised in Maine and currently living in Dixfield.

I am here today in support of LD 51, LD ⁸⁶⁹689, LD 1098, LD1148, LD12109 and LD 1228.

I have been privileged to have been a realtor for the past 20 years. I share with you the first two sentences of the preamble to the industry's code of ethics:

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Under all is the land. Upon its wise utilization and widely allocated ownership depend the survival and growth of free institutions and of our civilization. REALTORS® should recognize that the interests of the nation and its citizens require the highest and best use of the land and the widest distribution of land ownership.

Private ownership has been the bedrock of the wealth that this nation has enjoyed. And yet, if we do not own our own bodies—free from coercion—where are we? That is a fundamental God-given right.

The removal of religious and personal exemptions is against our most basic freedom. We must have the decision-making capacity over what goes in our body since we bear the costs. And—as we have seen—even experts or those holding the highest political seats in this land make mistakes. The recently mandated covid vaccines neither prevent transmission nor infection—by the manufacturers own admission.

And besides that, what medical intervention is one size fits all? Have we done away with the risk/benefit analysis?

These restrictions to education in Maine places an undue hardship on families forced to find alternatives to public school—those already struggling with rising costs. These measures engender a mistrust of the government agencies charged with protecting our health.

I desire a government to protect our freedom not infringe upon it. I ask you to do the right thing: legislatively restore our religious and philosophical exemptions.

Kathleen Szostek, Dixfield, ME 04224

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