

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Education & Cultural Affairs Committee

I am in support of L.D. 51, L.D. 869, L.D. 1098 L.D. 1148, L.D. 1209 and any other similar bills pertaining to vaccine requirements.

The removal of religious and philosophical exemptions has excluded some citizens from their rights because of their deeply held beliefs. Our current law wants those citizens to abandon their beliefs or be punished! For example, I have grandchildren who are not welcome to attend school or play sports through the rec department, because of the family's deeply held beliefs. They are likened to second class citizens. They are socially segregated. This is unconstitutional and criminal.

I have included some content from the ACLU website, further supporting why Maine needs to reinstate the religious and philosophical exemptions.

[<https://www.aclu.org/other/your-right-equality-education>]:

"The highest law in our land is the U.S. Constitution, which has some amendments, known as the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights guarantees that the government can never deprive people in the U.S. of certain fundamental rights including the right to freedom of religion and to free speech and the due process of law.

The Bill of Rights applies to young people as well as adults. And what I'm going to do right here is tell you about EQUAL TREATMENT.

DO ALL KIDS HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN EQUAL EDUCATION?

Yes! All kids living in the United States have the right to a free public education. And the Constitution requires that all kids be given equal educational opportunity no matter what their race, ethnic background, religion, or sex, or whether they are rich or poor, citizen or non-citizen.

In addition to this constitutional guarantee of an equal education, many federal, state and local laws also protect students against discrimination in education based on sexual orientation or disability, including pregnancy and HIV status.

The right to an equal educational opportunity is one of the most valuable rights you have. The Supreme Court said this in the landmark Brown v. Board of Education case when it struck down race segregation in the public schools."

Thank you for hearing my concerns, I hope you will support these bills.



Angela Greenwood
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