



**Grandmothers
For Reproductive Rights**

PO Box 950
Bath, ME 04530

info@grrnow.org
www.grrnow.org

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

I am Dr. Connie Adler, board chair at Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights (GRR!), and I am testifying on behalf of GRR! **in support** of LD 254, *An Act to Update the Sex Education and Consent Curriculum*. GRR! works intergenerationally through the lens of reproductive justice to assure sexual and reproductive rights for present and future generations. We leverage the status of grandmothers and elders as truth-tellers to advance access and safety for people of all ages to accurate information and shame-free support in their sexual and reproductive decision-making.

GRR!'s members are powerful and accomplished women in their 60s, 70s and 80s who came of age when sexual health education was non-existent and birth control was often inaccessible, or even illegal. Many of us endured the consequences of stigma and an absence of comprehensive understanding of our bodies, menstruation, sex, pleasure and reproduction. Older women have intimate knowledge of the importance of educating young people on these subjects via meaningful, comprehensive and dignified curricula with expert educators. Proper sexual health education informs young people and prepares them for healthy sexual relationships, while also providing critical opportunities for skill-building in identifying and negotiating boundaries and consent.

Without the critical information that expansive sex ed provides, young people are ill-equipped to navigate decision-making and their agency is compromised. Adolescent development—with all its typical anxiety, embarrassment and fear of disappointing adults--can lead even the most loved child of the most open and trusting parents to keep secrets. This can have devastating outcomes at worst, and at best, causes needless anguish and delayed medical care. Public sex education is our best tool for empowering Maine's present and future young people with the information, resources and skills needed to live healthy sexual and reproductive lives, which gives rise to healthy and safe partnerships, families and communities. We are particularly excited about the additional fiscal commitments this bill makes into what has been a flat funded program for too long. This is a much-needed investment in the future of public health in Maine. Thus, we urge you to vote **Ought To Pass** on LD 254.

Thank you,
Connie Adler, MD
Chair, Board of Directors

Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights (GRR!) works, through education and advocacy, to secure access to sexual & reproductive health, rights & justice for present & future generations.