



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Representative Anne Graham in support of
**LD 211, An Act to Make School Safer for Students with Epilepsy and
Other Seizure Disorders by Requiring Seizure Action Plans and Training
in Schools**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education

Good day, Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and the esteemed members of the Education Committee, I am Rep. Anne Graham and I serve the communities of North Yarmouth and the majority of Gray, House District 105. I am testifying in support of **LD 211, An Act to Make School Safer for Students with Epilepsy and Other Seizure Disorders by Requiring Seizure Action Plans and Training in Schools**. I thank Rep. Kuhn for bringing this bill forward.

As you may know, I am a pediatric nurse practitioner but no longer in clinical practice. My experience has spanned from public health to primary care and to pediatric neurology before I was elected to the Maine House in 2010. I had the privilege of working at Maine Neurology in Scarborough for nine years. I cared for children with epilepsy, autism and developmental delay. Many of my patients had epilepsy ranging from absence or staring spell seizures to idiopathic epilepsy, which most children outgrow. Some children had other underlying disorders in which seizures were part of their condition. Please see the footnoted link from Johns Hopkins University that explains about seizure disorders.¹

I had thought of giving this esteemed committee a primer on what the condition of epilepsy is and I found myself going down a rabbit hole of clinical information. I would be happy to share my knowledge of epilepsy if anyone has questions, but I would like you to put on your empathy hats for a moment. I would like you to picture yourself as a 13-year-old girl who I will call Abby.

Abby is an active, bright student who balances playing soccer and basketball while also playing the flute in the school band. She also has epilepsy, which is well controlled on medication. One day while at middle school, Abby had a seizure. It's hard enough to be a young teen in middle school, but to have epilepsy and have a seizure in the middle of a school day would be extremely hard (which is an understatement). You are surrounded by peers and teachers who have no idea of what is happening. Some seizures don't stop easily, which necessitates a rescue medication. This is where LD 211 comes

¹ <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/epilepsy/seizures-and-epilepsy-in-children>

in. Having a seizure action plan that teachers, staff and a school nurse have in place would make a huge difference to Abby.

Here's the good news, Abby only had one seizure in school but she always worried that she would have another. She was reassured that there was a plan in place. The other good news, Abby outgrew her epilepsy. Abby went on to be the captain of her soccer team, graduated at the top of her class and went on to the University of Maine and became a nurse.

Thank you for considering what it is like to be a teenager in middle school who happens to have epilepsy. This bill will make a big difference in many children's lives.