

**Testimony in opposition to LD #174:
An Act to Restore Religious Exemptions to Immunization Requirements
and LD #727: An Act to Repeal Certain Immunization Requirements for Schools**

**Submitted to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
of the 132nd Maine Legislature, First Regular Session
Monday, April 7, 2025**

Good morning Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and honorable committee members. My name is Allison Long. I live in Buckfield, Maine and I am a mom of school-aged children, a practicing Christian, and a strong supporter of science-based public health policy. I am here to testify in opposition to these two bills.

I have been an active advocate for science-based public health legislation since 2019. Before Maine PL #154, a law eliminating religious and philosophical exemptions to routine childhood vaccinations, the Maine School Immunization Assessment Report showed that 6.2% of Maine school children were missing some or all of these crucial health protections. Now, that number is down to 0.9%. This law WORKED. Maine children, and by extension Mainers of all ages who are especially vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases, are safer.

These bills, re-submitted every legislative session, represent how persistent and relentless misinformation and disinformation are. Removing nonmedical vaccine exemptions is especially perilous during the current climate, where public health infrastructure is catastrophically underfunded, vaccine-preventable diseases are exploding in states where religious and philosophical exemptions are allowed, and the United States Department of Health and Human Services is run by an anti-vaccine grifter intent on undoing decades of public health advances.

Maine is better than that. In March of 2020, 73% of voters--a strongly bipartisan majority, despite some arguments you will undoubtedly hear today--agreed that the only exceptions to routine childhood vaccinations should be medical ones approved by a trained medical practitioner. Let's not undo the will of the Maine people and once again threaten the health of our children.

You will undoubtedly hear from Christians today claiming that vaccines are against their religion. I am here as a Christian to tell you that is ludicrous, and that protecting the most vulnerable in our society is in fact central to the Christian faith. No major religious tradition opposes vaccination; in fact many embrace the care for one's neighbors and community that is reflected when one chooses to vaccinate.

Please be extremely wary of the tired anti-vaccine arguments you will surely hear today. Support science-based public health measures that the vast majority of Mainers want. Vote LD #174 and LD #727 "Ought Not to Pass". Thank you for your time.