

Testimony in Opposition to LD 174 & 727 by Janis Price, Portland

Good Morning, Senator Rafferty & Representative Murphy. My name is Janis Price. I'm here from Peaks Island to speak about LD 174 and 727. Both of these bills are a terrible idea, as Maine now boasts a 95% vaccination rate in public schools, although that number has been dropping since the pandemic.

Medicine and religion should have nothing to do with each other. I was raised in a home that didn't believe in immunizations or any other medical care. I was lucky that my first child was normal even though I had not been immunized against rubella. Others are not so lucky, like the young man living without his hearing after his unvaccinated mother caught rubella from another unvaccinated individual. Children and adults **do die** from vaccine-preventable diseases.

These bills will make the world much more dangerous to children than it already is. Children born with autoimmune diseases/disabilities and children going through cancer treatment, for example, as well as adults have their immune system compromised already. We need to all be vaccinated **FOR THEM**, as those individuals **have no choice** and **CANNOT** get vaccinated.

Furthermore, children not being vaccinated are being discriminated against under their 14th Amendment rights in the Constitution to "the equal protection of the laws." It is unfortunate that some religions do not allow medical care of any kind, including vaccines. In these homes, like the one I grew up in, one child died at age 7 after a 2-½ year battle with cancer, **completely unmedicated**, and another child nearly died at age 7 from a life-threatening accident when a doctor **overrode** my parents' wishes to not get her medical care. That sister is alive and well today.

Also, denial of vaccines means that some children, like in my home growing up, are not seeing a doctor regularly when signs and symptoms of serious disease like cancer and diabetes could be caught early. In conclusion, if churches no longer mind if their members, including children, get vaccines anyway, why add this exemption to the law? Maine people have spoken, and they want vaccines. (Most children raised without immunizations are not happy about it when they grow up and end up getting all of their vaccinations as adults.)

Please vote against LD 174 and 727. Thank you.