



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002  
(207) 287-1440  
TTY: (207) 287-4469

## **Sheila Lyman**

14 Lyman Lane,  
Livermore Falls, ME 04254  
Residence: (207) 320-0588  
[Sheila.Lyman@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Sheila.Lyman@legislature.maine.gov)

Senator Rafferty and Representative Murphy and members of the Education Committee,

I am Representative Sheila Lyman and I am here today in strong support of LD 1439: "An Act to Protect the Health and Welfare of Children in Public Schools by Requiring Parental Consent for Certain Tests, Analyses and Diagnoses"

This bill ensures parents have a vital role in the evaluation process of their children in schools. It mandates that school administrative units must obtain parental consent before conducting any evaluations related to a student's intellectual, emotional, behavioral, psychological, or physical development.

As a parent and teacher, I recognize the importance of understanding and assessing our children's needs to provide appropriate support. This bill request is all about communication to parents, involving parents, and informing parents for the purpose of prompting necessary collaboration between the public school personnel and parents/legal guardians. This bill is meant to ensure that parental consent occurs for any matters separate from the IEP testing and evaluation consent. You may ask, "What do these involve?" They hold accountable any actions or conditions that might include practices that occur outside of the IEP formal evaluation/assessment protocols that may be delivered during school counseling lessons, DEI/SEL curriculum, health classes, social studies, just to name some specific examples.

One scenario could be that of a teacher seeking support from a behavioral specialist to address the needs of a student exhibiting serious behavioral struggles during classroom instruction time. Data is collected in an observation. The data gathered in the classroom tallies the number of times that child exhibited off task behaviors. Later, a review of the observation with an analysis of conclusions drawn and potential directions to move forward with the learner are discussed. You might think that parents are always informed about such a situation and consent is given. Not necessarily.



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This is only one of a variety of ongoing practices delivered within a public school system that address the health and welfare of its students. Certainly, this is encouraged, as long as parental consent is part of the practice.

It is essential that parents are included in this process and have the opportunity to give consent before any evaluations take place. Parents are the primary advocates for their children and should be informed about any assessments that could impact their child's education and well-being.

Without this legislation, schools could conduct evaluations that have serious implications for our children's future without parental awareness or involvement. This bill not only promotes transparency but also fosters trust between parents and educational institutions. It recognizes that parents know their children best and should have complete authority about the decision-making process regarding evaluations that could potentially label or categorize them.

I have always been a strong proponent of public education. I have a passion for teaching and promoting strong public school systems for our learners. It is time for many law makers, for the DOE, and for many other agencies and groups with special interest in educational policy to recognize the loss of confidence and trust that many parents and our local tax payers are experiencing in regards to our public schools.

It's time for law makers and government agencies and departments to remind themselves that the public, the tax payers, foot the bill for our public education. Their voice matters!

I encourage you to support LD 1439 to protect the rights of parents and ensure that our children receive the thoughtful and considerate evaluation process they deserve.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.