



Christian Civic League of Maine

Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan and members of the Maine Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, I am Mike McClellan, Policy Director for the Christian Civic League of Maine. The Christian Civic League of Maine Envisions a state and nation where God is honored, religious freedom flourishes, families thrive, and life is cherished. We believe a Biblical approach works in life and including in governance.

I am here to testify in favor of LD 55, An Act To Protect Minority Religious Groups by Eliminating the Prior Approval Requirement for a School Absence for a Recognized Religious Holiday sponsored by Representative Justin Fecteau of Augusta.

In today's age, society sometimes treats the ability to practice your religion – including acting according to your convictions – as if it were a privilege we can exercise. But it's not merely a privilege: it's a right! - The First Amendment to the Constitution prohibits the government from discriminating on the basis of religion or stopping someone from practicing their religion. The freedom to believe and act on our belief system is a fundamental and core principle as to what it means to be American!

We would also point out that with belief comes responsibility and in education, situations like this present positive opportunities for the school and teacher to interact and even draw in the student's family. It is an import point of success that the families in question work with the school and teachers to communicate absence and arrange to make up missed work.

This legislation simply removes prior approval, which should be assumed as educators and families work together in their education journey. For that reason, we support LD 55, An Act To Protect Minority Religious Groups by Eliminating the Prior Approval Requirement for a School Absence for a Recognized Religious Holiday sponsored by Representative Justin Fecteau of Augusta.