

Ian Brenner-Simpson
Ellsworth
LD 51

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, I am asking you today to vote 'ought to pass' on LD 51.

My time in Maine's public high school system was a time I will never forget. As a musician, I was offered some of the most influential opportunities to perform, write, and create that I've ever had and I consider my years in high school to be some of the most pivotal years of my musical journey.

My younger sister is unfortunately not able to attend public high school in Maine due to there being no philosophical or religious exemption from immunization offered to her. I am so saddened to see her grow as a visual and performing artist but not have the opportunities I did to grow with others. In art, in any field of study, collaboration and peer interaction is half the battle. I feel there is a loss for not only the children unable to access the public high school resources but also to the community that is denying these kids access. For many families, homeschooling is not feasible and they are instead choosing to relocate. I for one have moved out of Maine to a state that offers me education regardless of the choices I make surrounding my health.

I am asking you to vote "out to pass" on this bill so that any and every young person in Maine may have the chance to look back like I am on their high school experience. To see the growth and maturity achieved in those 4 years and to feel safe, confident, and free to send their own children to the same schools.

My memories of high school are so fond and so positive, my wish is for every child in Maine to have the opportunity to make the same memories.

I am grateful for your time and consideration,
Ian Brenner-Simpson
Former Ellsworth Maine resident, now residing in Austin Texas.