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I am a lifelong Mainer whose children who attended public school until they were forcibly removed from Fourth and Fifth grades three years ago due to the removal of religious exemptions for vaccination requirements. Our religious beliefs prohibit us from taking some vaccines which utilize human aborted fetal cells and certain animal ingredients in their production process.

I am the sole parent and sole provider for my children. I work a full time job, a part time side job, and now I homeschool my children because Maine no longer considers them worthy of access to education.

My teenagers are being denied access to school and school activities.

They have no friends.

They can't play sports.

They can't go to school dances.

They won't have a prom or a graduation.

They are isolated.

They are segregated.

They are forgotten by legislators and lawmakers.

The purpose of taxpayer-funded "public" education is to ensure equal access to ALL children.

The law that made Maine one of only six states in our nation to enforce government-mandated vaccination is not being equally and fairly enforced. It was recently widely reported that hundreds of children in Lewiston public schools, new Mainers who have recently arrived from third world countries and do not meet vaccination requirements under this law are currently in school. Are all children worthy of access to education? Who chooses which children must follow the law and which ones don't?

And let's not forget that all Maine children were in school during an active deadly worldwide pandemic, all of them unvaccinated.

A state or a country without religious freedom is not free. To restore exemptions would be to right a wrong and it would show that Maine believes in equal, equitable and inclusive access to education for all children.