

Neeburbunn Lewis  
Cape Elizabeth  
LD 51

Dear Respective Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

I am writing to submit public testimony in support of LD 51: An Act to Restore Religious and Philosophical Exemptions to Immunization Requirements.

I submit this request as a Wabanaki member of the Penobscot Nation, a registered nurse and a female.

I have witnessed firsthand many tribal members struggle from generational trauma. Trauma from cultural assimilation and unjust treatments that have destroyed a beautiful culture and group of human beings. A strength of resilience comes from our Wabanaki culture and the healing powers of the Creator and the earth.

The removal of Religious and Philosophical exemptions stripped my rights as an American Indian. It stripped my rights as a female and bodily integrity. And it stripped my faith in our government. I am advocating for all cultures that have a diverse belief on vaccinations to have the right to choose and make informed consent. I am advocating for all females right to personal autonomy.

The act of removing religious and philosophical exemptions not only affects Native Americans in Maine but every single culture that we are embracing and trying to protect. Over the past couple of years, this law has caused children to be excluded from public school systems, it has created disparities, created trauma, created a divide and created unequal opportunities.

As members, you have a unique opportunity to inspire trust in our government. You have the opportunity to show reflection and change. The opportunity to say "I value my neighbor's religious and philosophical views".

For my children and all the other families that have special Religious and Philosophical views, I urge you to vote Ought to Pass.

Thank you,  
Neeburbunn Lewis  
Cape Elizabeth, Maine