

Karen Marysdaughter
Bangor
LD 51

April 1, 2023

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs:

My name is Karen Marysdaughter and I am a resident of Bangor. I am writing in opposition to LD 51 and any related bills that would undermine vaccinations in the state of Maine.

Over 20 years ago I contracted pertussis (whooping cough) and was miserably ill for at least 2 weeks. The coughing was so severe that I could barely sleep, and had trouble keeping food down. I lost 8 pounds during my illness. All of this despite the fact that I was a middle aged healthy adult. A few days before I developed symptoms, I visited a friend and met her newborn daughter. When I realized I had pertussis, I was terrified I might have infected her child, who had not yet been immunized, since I know that pertussis is a very serious, possibly fatal illness for non-immunized infants. Fortunately she did not catch it from me, although I did infect two other neighborhood children. And fortunately, they had both been immunized and had mild cases.

Two years ago I contracted Lyme disease. I believe we caught it in time to eliminate the bacteria, but Lyme is a sneaky disease and I worry about the possible long term consequences if the antibiotics didn't get it all. I learned that a vaccine for humans was developed at least 20 years ago, but in part due to anti-vaccination activism at that time, the vaccine was taken off the market. This makes me furious. As someone who gardens, hikes, and canoes on a regular basis, I hate it that I have to worry every time I am outdoors during tick season (which is ever expanding). How much more parents must worry about their children playing outdoors! I am eagerly awaiting the new vaccine that is currently in clinical trials.

We are so fortunate that for many years we have not had to worry about our children suffering the severe effects of many illnesses that used to ravage communities. For this we can thank vaccines, safe and effective protectors of public health. I am sorry that people who are opposed to vaccinations are being drawn in by gross misinformation and thereby putting themselves and their families at risk. That risk is bad enough; I do not believe they should be allowed to risk the rest of the community by their actions.

I urge you to vote "Ought not to pass" on LD 51 and any related bills. Thank you for your attention.