

Maria Peacock
Northport
LD 51

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, Representative Dodge and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

I am testifying in support of LD #'s 51, 869, 1098, 1148, 1209, & 1228.

I graduated in 1999 from the University of Maine system with help from State of Maine welfare assistance. My degree in Health Information Technology and the credentials I acquired helped me begin a career in healthcare in medical records. During my 22 years in Health Information, I was able to work my way off of welfare assistance. My 18 years of employment at Waldo County General Hospital (WCGH) came to an end in October 2021 when my request for religious exemption from the vaccine mandate was not able to be accepted. I am not able to work in Maine in my chosen profession due to the vaccine mandate and inability to request a religious and/or philosophical exemption. At this point, it is highly likely that I will need to move out of state to be able to work in healthcare again.

I have considered going back to school, however, without being able to request exemption within the Maine higher education system, this is unlikely. Additionally, I had hoped that my grandchildren would move to Maine and grow up in our beautiful state. Without them being able to request exemption, if they chose, this is not where I would want them to grow up.

To reiterate, I am testifying in support of LD's 51, 869, 1098, 1148, 1209, & 1228.

I just want to be able to work in a career in which I have excelled and prospered. I want to return to serving and assisting patients with their medical record needs. Please consider enacting these proposed LD's so that myself and others like me can get back to work and seek education and careers in Maine, rather than having to leave the state.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria F. Peacock, RHIT
Registered Health Information Technician
former Supervisor of Health Information at WCGH

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