

Senator Rafferty  
Representative Brennan  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the committee, my name is Michael Fletcher. I am writing to urge you to support LD 254: An Act to Update the Sex Education & Consent Curriculum.

Sexuality education is in some cases the only point a young person may have access to medically accurate and age appropriate information about their bodies and their autonomy. Without basic knowledge of your body and consent you are more susceptible to victimization. Comprehensive sex education gives young people the tools to advocate for themselves and their well beings. Sexuality education also give young people the empowerment in their own bodies teaching boundary setting which help shape healthy relationships in all aspects of their lives.

The sex education I received when I was in school was very under funded and out dated. The class I took was abstinence based and focused solely on STD/STIs and pregnancy. Now as an adult I have based my career in harm reduction I know there is more effective ways too approach this curriculum. LD 254 would ensure that educators in Maine have access to high quality training, inclusive curricula, and technical support from experts. Meaning young people in Maine will get access to the sex education they deserve.

Even though I grew up in a place with under funded sex education the class, the teacher who taught the class was very honest and open when we asked questions and never made any student feel ashamed for any questions they may have had. she also held space for us to ask questions 1on1 to make sure we were not navigating our lives wondering about our own bodies or thinking dangerous situations normal.

In my own personal experience I wish my course was longer then it was. In my case with the knowledge and data I have now I wish my course was more based in consent and what it means to be safe in your own body along with body autonomy and show a more diverse array of what sexuality can mean to an individual.

I believe we can see a world with less disease, violence and stigma. We will also see a population with a better understanding of their bodies which leads to better relationships, a better relationship with sex, and better access to health care. You are unable to receive the most effective healthcare if you are unable to articulate what is happening to/in your body.

Please vote "ought to pass" on LD 254: An Act to Update the Sex Education & Consent Curriculum.

Thank you for your time & attention,  
Michael Fletcher  
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