

TESTIMONY

In support of

LD 1: “An Act to Establish the COVID-19 Patient Bill of Rights” Grace Leavitt, President, Maine Education Association

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services February 23rd, 2021

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and esteemed members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services,

My name is Grace Leavitt. I am a Spanish teacher on leave from Greely High School while serving as President of the Maine Education Association. The MEA has nearly 24,000 members—faculty and staff in our pre-K-12 public schools, our institutions of higher education, and many dedicated retired educators.

I am writing on behalf of our members in support of LD 1: “An Act to Establish the COVID-19 Bill of Rights”.

Educators have been on the front lines during this pandemic. Unlike many other states, Maine has provided a great deal of in-person instruction with relatively few COVID cases traced back to school transmission. This is in large part due to the great work by most educators and students to abide by the safety requirements established for in-person instruction created by the Maine Department of Education and the Maine Centers for Disease Control. Our educators are doing all they can to continue to move students’ learning forward while simultaneously endeavoring to keep their students as well as themselves and their families safe from COVID-19.

Yet I have heard throughout the past months of educators who know that a parent has not brought their child to be tested after learning that the child was a close contact of someone who tested positive. Some have told me that parents of students have gone to work even when they should instead be quarantining, having been identified as a close contact. And worse yet, some have not sought medical care when needed.

This pandemic, this virus, is affecting all of us. And everyone, especially our most vulnerable, needs to have access to the care and the coverage that LD 1 would provide.

In order to keep everyone--our students, our educators, our communities— as safe as we can, as safe as possible, we need to keep everyone as safe as we possibly can—providing the necessary testing, care, vaccinations. It is just common sense.

We all heard many times during the initial months of this too-long pandemic that we are “in this together”. LD 1 helps ensure that while we are in this together, we will come through this together.

I urge your support of LD 1.

Thank you, and please contact me if you have any questions.

Grace Leavitt
President, Maine Education Association

gleavitt@maineea.org

35 Community Drive- Augusta, ME 04330-8005 - 207-622-5866 800-452-8709 - 207-632-2129 fax www.maineea.org

35 Community Drive- Augusta, ME 04330-8005 - 207-622-5866 800-452-8709 - 207-632-2129 fax www.maineea.org