

Roberta Manter  
Fayette

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Roberta Manter, and I live in Fayette. I am writing to ask you to vote AGAINST LD 1344. In the past year we have seen horrific abuses of power, with devastating consequences for Maine's small businesses. Many of those businesses have been forced to close their doors permanently - yet I do not know of a single business that had to close because too many of its employees or too many of its clients had COVID. Many of the businesses that were closed could have remained open with little risk to the health of the public, yet they were swept away with blanket closings that did not consider the actual level of risk for each business. Many of the businesses that have stayed open have only been able to do so because of government bailouts - which ultimately must be paid for by means of taxing the very people who are out of work. Where will that money come from? Forced closings and bailouts are creating a nation of people who are dependent on the government for their survival. **THIS IS NOT THE AMERICAN WAY!**

In case you have forgotten, we have a US Constitution that is the supreme law of the land. The 14th Amendment, section 1, States:

"No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

LD 1344 would violate this one provision three times! It would abridge the privileges and immunities of citizens: it would deny people of their businesses and livelihood without due process: and it would deny people the equal protection of the laws.

Article 1 of the US Constitution prohibits states from passing any law impairing the obligation of contracts. Forcing a business to close its doors most certainly would do just that.

For these reasons I contend that the Maine Legislature is prohibited by the US Constitution from passing a law such as LD 1344. I implore you to listen to the overwhelming sentiment of your constituents and give this bill a unanimous "Ought Not to Pass."

Thank you.