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Greetings,

My apologies for the last minute submission. I understand that time is of the essence and thus will make my plea short and to the point. I come to you as a mother and an Educational Technician at the local public school for the past 10 years. I am also a State of Maine registered Professional Engineer, Realtor, and sit on the local Planning Board and Veterans Memorial Committee.

I urge you to pass LD 867. I have seen first hand the state of children's mental health degrade significantly during pandemic, not only in my own household, but in the school system at large. I hear from children on a daily basis one story or another about how Covid affects their lives. As restrictions have increased, there has been a direct (negative) impact on the kids.

Several examples include:

1. Social divisions among the kids based on familial stances on Covid restrictions. (Loss of friends, bullying, isolation)
2. Families torn apart physically due to mandates & quarantines.
3. Families torn apart emotionally due to disagreements between separated/divorced parents, ie. not wanting to see a child anymore for fear they don't practice the same level of Covid safety. And/or pressuring the child to stand against the other parent.
4. Loss of familial security due to financial strain (loss of jobs due to mandated vaccines)
5. Loss of familial security due to distancing (not seeing relatives at holidays and other events)

I could list many other examples, but these are the most frequently told. The point being that mandates placed on adults trickle down to negatively affect children. It is well documented that this pandemic has had an enormous impact on the mental health of our children. Please understand that it is impossible to shield the children from what is going on in the adult world, and they are having to process these very adult issues without the maturity to handle it. Again, I implore you to pass LD 867. Our future depends on today's children, and they aren't doing okay.

Regards,
Andrea Perley