



Dear Judiciary Committee Chair and Members,

Parents have an inalienable right and an undeniable responsibility to raise their children, this is a right that is both foundational to individual liberty and essential to the flourishing of society. The idea that the government should have any role in taking over the fundamental duty of raising children is not only an infringement on personal freedoms, but it also undermines the core structure of family, community, and human development.

First and foremost, parents are the first and most important educators of their children. They know their children's needs, strengths, weaknesses, and values better than any government institution ever could. Each child is unique, and the guidance, love, and support that parents provide can be tailor-made to meet their children's individual needs. Parents, as primary caregivers, possess a deep emotional bond with their children that cannot be replicated by any state intervention. This intimate knowledge and connection is crucial in shaping the child's moral compass, emotional well-being, and sense of identity. A parent's right to raise their child should never be diminished by bureaucratic oversight or government interference.

Unfortunately, this amendment is necessary in our State because the State of Maine has already started down the road to slowly taking parental rights away. As I have been traveling the state talking to Mainers all over for my campaign, I have heard the horror stories. I have heard about schools that have secretly started transitioning children without allowing the parents to even know the conversation was happening, much less that action was being taken. One child was given Zoloft at a school clinic without informing the parents or even discussing the situation with the parents at all. Zoloft can be a life altering drug with many side effects. If I take my 13-year-old to the doctor in Maine and I ask for the records, I can't get them. I am intentionally left out of all medical decisions for someone who is not deemed old enough by the state to make a decision to start smoking or get a tattoo. These are just a few examples of how state entities are currently usurping our rights as parents in Maine. I fear we are heading down a slippery slope, the infractions will only be getting more egregious if we don't put a stop to them now. In a healthy society, the role of the government is to protect individual freedoms and rights—not to usurp them.

In conclusion, parents have the full right and responsibility to raise their children because it is their most fundamental duty. The government shall never encroach upon this right. Children belong to their parents, not the state, and any attempt to displace parents from their essential role only weakens the fabric of our society. Parents are uniquely suited to nurture and guide their children toward becoming responsible, compassionate, and capable individuals. The government, on the other hand, is an impersonal entity, and while it has a role in supporting families, it must never allow itself to replace them. The well-being of children, the vitality of families, and the strength of society depend on upholding the inviolable right of parents to raise their children.

For all of these reasons, I plead with this committee to pass LD 492 and LD 410 and entrust the parents of our fine state to do their most important job in life.

Respectfully,

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Please read my attached testimony (doc).