



January 2022
131st Legislature 1st Regular Session
LD 51- Authored by Representative Gary Drinkwater
Assigned to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Bill Outline:

LD 51 is very simple in nature. It would restore the religious and philosophical exemptions for students, and certain healthcare facilities. It would not repeal current immunization requirements or mandates; it would however reinstate the original religious and philosophical opt outs that existed for decades prior to 2019.

Committee Members:

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The Legislative Process – Part 1

- Committee Action
 - The committee will set a public hearing. The hearing can be announced with as little as two weeks' notice.
 - As soon as the hearing date is set, we will notify everyone via email, social media, and our website.
 - A rally will be planned for the day of the hearing.
 - At the hearing, the bill's sponsor testifies first, followed by any cosponsors, then the public.
 - The committee may analyze the bill, hold a work session, and discuss potential amendments.
- Committee Report
 - Once finished with the bill, the committee will take a vote on whether the bill ought to pass, or ought not to pass. This is the recommendation that will be made to the whole Legislature.
 - A unanimous report means all committee members agree. Possible unanimous committee reports are:
 - ought to pass
 - ought to pass as amended
 - ought to pass in new draft
 - ought not to pass
 - referral to another committee
 - A divided report means committee members disagree about a bill. It usually includes a "majority" and "minority" report on the bill. For example, a majority "ought not to pass" report and a minority report of "ought to pass as amended."
 - At this point the bill goes back to the legislative chamber (House or Senate) where the bill originated. For LD 51 it will go back to the House.
- Unanimous "Ought Not to Pass"
 - If the committee votes "ought not to pass" unanimously, the bill is essentially defeated. It is placed in the legislative file, and a letter from the committee chairs conveying this report appears on the Senate and House Calendars. At this point, no further action may be taken, unless a Joint Order recalling the bill is approved by a two-thirds majority in both chambers.
- First Reading
 - Bills that receive an "ought to pass" (as is, amended, or in a new draft) or "divided" report move on to the originating chamber (in this case, the House).
 - The bill is reported to the floor
 - Any committee amendments are read
 - Members of the chamber will then vote to accept or reject the committee report (or one of the reports, if the committee was divided).
 - If an "ought to pass" report is accepted, the bill receives its first reading by the Clerk or Secretary.
 - If the committee's report is rejected, the bill is defeated.
 - If an "ought not to pass" report is accepted, the bill is essentially defeated.
 - Once read, the bill is assigned for a second reading, which is usually the next day.
- Second Reading
 - The bill is given its second reading.
 - Floor amendments may be offered.
 - A final vote is taken on whether the bill should be engrossed and passed to the other chamber. A bill passes by simple majority.
 - If the majority vote "nay" then the bill is defeated.
 - If the majority vote "yea" then the bill moves on to the second chamber.
 - A bill must pass both chambers in identical form in order to move on to the Governor for signature.
 - If a bill passes both chambers in identical form, it will move on to the Governor to be signed or vetoed.

We will be updating everyone at every step of the process, so make sure you are looking for our e-mails!

If you would like to read more detailed information about the process, you can do so here: [Follow A Bill Through the Legislature | Maine State Legislature](#)

Testimony at the Committee Hearing

Testimony Recommendations:

- There are two types of testimony: oral and written.
- We suggest that everyone submit written testimony, even if you plan to also testify orally.
- Oral testimony should last 2-3 minutes maximum. When you testify before the committee, bring enough copies for each member of the committee and yourself.
- Written and oral testimony can be the exact same testimony. However, oral testimony can allow you to (briefly) expand on certain points of your written testimony.
- Submitted written testimony should be one page or less. Anything beyond one page is not likely to be read.
- Written testimony should be submitted online.

Submitting Written Testimony:

- Go here: [Online Testimony Submission \(mainelegislature.org\)](https://www.mainelegislature.org/online-testimony-submission)
- Select “Public Hearing.”
- Select “Education and Cultural Affairs”
- Select the hearing for LD 51
- Once a hearing is set, more detailed instructions for submission will be sent out.

Written and Oral Testimony Tips

1. Decide on the main idea you want to express to the committee.
2. Use your time wisely--choose the most important thing that you want them to understand.
3. Respectfully describe your point of view without being hyperbolic, dramatic, or inflammatory.
4. Pull your ideas from your own reality. Avoid hypothetical situations.
5. Express how the bill will influence or affect you.
6. If you are using data, ensure that it is correct and credible. Include a link to the source of your data.
7. Do not assume the committee understands your context, your experience is unique to you. Use language that is concrete and literal.
8. Maximum length should be one page written or three minutes oral.
9. Use the correct testimony format: Begin oral testimony by addressing the Committee Chairs and members. For this hearing it will look like this: Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the committee, I am asking you today to vote ought to pass on LD 51.
10. Have at least one person proofread your testimony.
11. Oral: Practice many times with your notes and time yourself. The committee will cut you off when you reach the time limit.
12. Oral: You cannot show graphs, photos, or other props. You CAN include them with written testimony.
13. Testimonies become a public record. Only share what you want to be made public.
14. Remember to close your testimony by asking the committee to vote “ought to pass” or “ought not to pass”.
15. Submit your testimony to the Education and Cultural Affairs committee

LD 51 Talking Points.

- LD 51 would NOT repeal ANY current immunization requirements for any demographic.
- The Religious Exemption and its importance to religious communities:
 - How does the removal of religious exemptions affect your family?
 - Why is your faith important to you, and how does vaccination affect your faith?
- How did LD 798 affect you or your family when it went into effect?
 - Financial Impact
 - Impact on your family
 - Impact on your career
 - Impact on the mental health of you and/or your family
 - How did this impact the trust you have in the systems? Medical; Education; Government
- How has LD 798 led to unequal enforcement?
 - Denied Medical exemptions.
 - Grandfathered IEPs not honored.
 - Positive titers not accepted.
 - Class inequalities
- What are some of the assurances made during LD 798 that has not been upheld by the State?
 - The language for Medical Exemptions altered after bill was passed and signed.
 - The use of the DOE FAQ to redefine sections of the law.
- How would LD 51 passing affect you or your family?
 - Would you send your child back to school?
 - Would you be able to go back to work?
 - Would you stay in the State?
- Access to community colleges
 - Has your child been planning to use the CC tuition program for their higher education?
 - Does the current law prevent your child from benefiting from the financial support of the CC programs?
 - Will your child be able to attend a college elsewhere if LD 51 does not pass?

Testimony of Special Interest

If any of the following applies to you, please e-mail us directly to discuss privately how you can help support this bill.

- Constitutional Law Professionals
- Immigration Law Professionals
- Medical Professionals
- Medical/Scientific Researchers or Specialists
- Religious leader
- A family that has immigrated or is seeking asylum in Maine.
- Anyone who is working or has worked in administration at any facility affected by any mandate.
- Anyone who has personal experience as a patient in Maine affected by the staffing shortages in healthcare.

Off Topic Talking Points

It is important to remember, there is immense pressure coming from the top down. For nearly 40 years or more, there has been a multi-billion-dollar industry running well targeted campaigns. Propagated stories designed to not only sell these products, but to sell absolute faith and trust in these products.

Hindsight is 20/20, and we now have the benefit of having gone through the very thing we warned repeatedly about in 2019. That being the roll-out of a vaccine that not everyone wants or should take. This can be beneficial, if articulated properly.

The last thing we want to do however, is get into the “vaccine debate”. It can be easy to fall into that trap of debating the safety, effectiveness, etc. When we get into this debate, we often lose our audience. They simply shut down and are unable to hear us. So, the following are topics we encourage folks to avoid, unless you are a professional in an applicable field.

- Do not discuss Vaccine Ingredients unless it is relevant to your religion, or a specific experience you have. But be specific and provide sources that Committee Members will recognize as reputable.
- Do not discuss VAERS unless relevant to your profession, ie data analysis, etc.
- Do not discuss alternative covid treatments.
- Do not discuss the pandemic response.
- Do not discuss the Emergency Use Authorization

Support & Assistance

Once you have drafted your testimony, we are asking that you send a copy to:
2023Testimony@gmail.com

Your draft will only be seen by someone from HCM Leadership. This is a strategic review to help us ensure that the important topics we need covered are covered.

If you have any questions or need assistance at any point in time, please don't hesitate to reach out. If you have not done so, please sign up for our Newsletter to receive important updates and information.

Thank you, for never giving up, for staying with us. Regardless of the outcome of LD51, we will never give up. They want us to give up, go away, comply. But we've still only just begun!

“There is no power in hopelessness.”