

**MAINE
PRINCIPALS'
ASSOCIATION**



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*MPA is an Equal
Opportunity Organization*

TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee
**RE: In Opposition of LD 1953: RESOLUTION, Proposing an
Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish a
Parental Bill of Rights**
DATE: May 24, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Dr. Holly Blair, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Principals' Association – Professional Division. The MPA represents more than 800 PreK-12 principals and assistant principals of public and private schools in Maine.

The MPA Legislative Committee is in strong opposition of LD 1953. There are concerns that a Parental Bill of Rights may override the rights of children and violate their autonomy. The bill may give parents the ultimate decision-making authority regarding medical treatment, education, and religious upbringing, which could potentially undermine the interests of children.

Additionally, the Parental Bill of Rights may lead to conflicts between parents and professionals, such as doctors, teachers, or social workers. As the bill grants parents the right to make decisions about their children's health, education, and upbringing, it could potentially interfere with the professional judgment of experts who are responsible for ensuring the well-being of children.

Lastly, a Constitutional change to add in Parental Bill of Rights could be used to promote discriminatory practices against vulnerable groups of children, such as those from minority backgrounds, LGBTQ+ children, or children with disabilities. The bill may enable parents to impose their beliefs and values on their children, even if they clash with scientific evidence, social norms, or constitutional rights.

We respect the choices that parents make for their own children and will work with parents to address their specific concerns for their own children. Ultimately schools want to be a safe space that is welcoming for ALL students. We do not believe that a change in the Maine Constitution will allow this to happen.

For these reasons, we strongly urge the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass LD 1953.