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**Outstanding Small Chapter by  
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## Good afternoon Senator Millett, Representative Kornfield, and distinguished members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

My name is Adrienne Carmack. I am a Board Certified Pediatrician, practicing in Bangor, and on the Board of Directors for the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. My husband and I moved to Veazie with our 6 children in 2005 when my husband completed his Air Force commitment. **I am testifying today in support of L.D. 798, "An Act to Protect Maine Children and Students from Preventable Diseases by Repealing Certain Exemptions from the Laws Governing Immunization Requirements."**

I first want to tell you about a retired Pediatrician who could not be here today. Dr. Ron Stryer lives at Dirigo Pines in Orono and I often see him when I visit my father in law. When I told Dr. Stryer about this bill he shared with me that during his first year of residency at Baltimore City Hospital in 1955, Salk introduced the polio vaccine. Baltimore city hospital was the only hospital that took the highly contagious patients with polio for all of Maryland and there were over 100 patients admitted with paralysis from polio. By his third year of residency there was not a single patient admitted with paralysis from polio. Immunizations are one of our greatest Public health accomplishments.

I graduated from medical school at Columbia University in New York in 1992, the same year the vaccine against Haemophilus influenzae B was available. Over the span of my medical career, the vaccines for rotavirus, varicella, Influenza, Hepatitis A and B, and HPV have become available and I have witnessed the benefit of these vaccines.

In 2009 the H1N1 virus spread quickly through our country. I was available to help when the Bangor health department ran a shot clinic for the region. As I drove across town I wondered if anyone would even show up. I can still remember the feeling that overcame me when I pulled up to the Bangor Auditorium and there were crowds of families circling the building. I was assigned to help immunize the children who could not enter the building, or who needed to stay in their car, due to their medical conditions. When a vaccine preventable disease was bearing down on our communities, our public health system was able to mobilize and immunize and save lives.

Advocating for children to be immunized is one of the most important roles I can fill as a physician. I also can see the benefit of immunization to a community, so that those who are not able to be immunized can be protected as well.

When a child meets the criteria for a medical exemption, as recommended by the CDC- (<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/should-not-vacc.html>)

I do not hesitate to assist in this exemption. But instances of children needing medical exemptions remind us of the importance of the rest of the community receiving all the recommended vaccines. Removing philosophical and religious exemptions can help to ensure that our communities and our schools are safer for our families and our children.

Often when faced with a decision about a treatment, parents ask me what I would do? I do not hesitate when it comes to vaccines, in fact, at the last count, my six children have received 211 vaccines. As a physician and a mother, I know Vaccines work, Vaccines are safe, and Vaccines save lives.

For the health and safety of the children and people of Maine, I strongly urge your support of LD 798, Representative Tipping's bill in the Maine legislature: "An Act To Protect Maine Students from Preventable Diseases by Repealing Certain Exemptions from the Laws Governing Immunization Requirements."