



## Maine Chapter

### Maine Chapter

70 Waterville Street, Suite 2  
Portland, ME 04101  
(207) 879-1509  
Toll Free (877) 879-1509  
Fax (207) 622-3332

## TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE CHAPTER, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

### IN SUPPORT OF

### L.D. 482, AN ACT TO ENSURE ADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE FOR CHILDREN

#### Executive Committee

##### President

Lisa D. Ryan, DO  
Bridgton Pediatrics  
103 S. High Street  
Bridgton, ME 04009  
(207) 647-4232  
Fax: (207) 861-5448  
Email: lryan@aap.org

##### Vice President

Donald R. Burgess, MD  
2 Berry Court  
Kennebunkport, ME 04043  
(207) 985-9001  
Fax: (207) 985-9101  
Email: dburgess@aap.org

##### Treasurer

Sydney Sewall, MD  
263 Water Street, 3rd Floor  
Augusta, ME 04330  
(207) 623-2977  
Email: syd.doc@verizon.net

##### Immediate Past President

John A. Salvato, MD  
Waterville Pediatrics  
159 Silver Street  
Waterville, ME 04901  
(207) 873-5437  
Email: jsalvato@aap.org

##### Executive Director

Alex Hildebrand  
70 Waterville Street, Suite 2  
Portland, ME 04101  
(207) 879-1509  
Email: ahildebrand@aap.org

##### AAP Headquarters

141 Northwest Point Boulevard  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007  
Phone: (847) 434-4000  
Fax: (847) 434-8000  
Email: kidsdocs@aap.org  
www.aap.org

Joint Committee on Health and Human Services  
Monday, May 9, 2005

Good Morning Senator Mayo, Representative Pingree and members of the Joint Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Dr. Lisa Ryan and I am testifying as President of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, whose 220 physician members dedicate their professional lives to the healthcare of children.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) believes that *all* children deserve *effective* medical treatment that is likely to prevent substantial harm or suffering or death. We recognize and respect the need for parents to express religious beliefs, especially in times of illness. Our membership believes in sensitivity and flexibility to differing beliefs and practices. However, these must not be a barrier to effective modern medical care for a child faced with substantial suffering, illness or death.

Children who have needlessly suffered and died in the recent past include those with treatable conditions as bacterial meningitis. Lack of treatment often leads to death or if not death then mental retardation, deafness, and severe disability. In most cases these children and others like them can be effectively treated and not to do so is neglect and abuse of a child's rights. Parents who refuse these effective treatments on religious grounds should be subjected to the same abuse and neglect guidelines as any other parent in the state.

The First Amendment protects religious *beliefs* but governmental obligation arises when parental religious *practices* subject minor children to loss of life or substantial risk of harm. Laws, therefore, should not exempt parents from criminal or civil liability in the name of religion when effective medical treatment would likely prevent a child's substantial harm, suffering or death and we are strongly in favor of LD 482.