



*P.O. Box 315/ 29 Association Drive, Manchester, ME 04351 * Phone: 207-623-1101 *
Fax: 207-623-4228 * www.mainedo.org*

Testimony of the Maine Osteopathic Association
Before the Committee on Health & Human Services

In Reference to:

LD 172 An Act to Allow Health Care Workers to Return to Work by Reinstating Exemptions from Immunization Requirements

LD 601 An Act to Reduce the Shortage of Municipal Emergency Medical Services Personnel by Removing Certain Vaccination Requirements

LD 1547 An Act to Temporarily Prohibit the State from Mandating COVID-19 Vaccinations

LD 1598 An Act to Allow an Exception to Immunization Requirements for Health Care Workers for Vaccines Approved Under Emergency Use Authorization

Public Hearing: Monday, April 24, 2023 10:00 AM, Cross Building, Room 209

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Committee on Health & Human Services,

My name is Jodie Hermann, DO, FACOI, FACP, MBA. I am board certified in Internal Medicine and Neuromuscular Manual Medicine and I practice internal medicine and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine at area hospitals, such as Maine Medical Center. I am pleased to provide testimony on behalf of the Maine Osteopathic Association in opposition to the bills listed above.

The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing approximately 400 osteopathic physicians as well as more than 700 residents and students. Our mission is to “serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy and member services in order to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State.”

These six bills would undermine our progress in protecting public health. They sow doubt in our public health system, science, modern medicine, and the professionals that we rely upon to keep our communities safe. Many are based on misinformation about vaccine safety and effectiveness.

The MOA is a strong supporter of immunizations, which are an important public health tool with twofold utility—protecting those who are vaccinated and those they encounter from the spread of disease. We, along with the rest of Maine’s physician community, were vocal in our support of Governor Mills’ 2021 Emergency Rule Requiring Health Care Workers in Maine to Be Fully Vaccinated Against COVID-19.

In our formal statement MOA President Brian Kaufman, DO stated: "Osteopathic medicine has a long and proud history of utilizing the bodies innate healing mechanisms to combat illness and promote health. The appropriate application of vaccinations has transformed the face of healthcare and in the truest osteopathic tradition has advanced preventative care.

The ongoing pandemic has given rise to another vaccine which despite its rapid development and deployment has been shown to be highly effective and safe. Given the ongoing efforts in prevention and treatment of infection by COVID-19, the medical science firmly supports vaccination in those who do not have a medical contraindication.

Our patients deserve whatever protection we can offer and for this reason the Maine osteopathic association is in favor of mandatory vaccination of workers in healthcare to ensure patient safety and hasten the decline of the pandemic."

The tenets of this statement remain applicable to these pieces of legislation in front of you today. We remain committed to *all* healthcare workers (including EMS) adhering to vaccine requirements as deemed appropriate by our healthcare agencies (DHHS, CDC). And we believe we must trust in these agencies to determine the necessity of these and other future immunizations moving forward.

As physicians, we must utilize the best medical decision making and treatment tools at hand to provide the best possible patient care and outcomes. We must accept that the "best" practices and tools evolve and we must be prepared to evolve with them.

Our current vaccine policies allow us to live, work, and play safe from disease and for appropriate agencies to change these policies as appropriate, weighing new scientific knowledge and public health risks as they arise. When we know better, we must do better to protect ourselves and others from the spread of disease.

It is for these reasons the MOA urges the committee to vote ought not to pass on LD 172, LD 601, LD 1547, and LD 1598.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at info@mainedo.org if you have any questions. Thank you.