



March 30, 2025

Re: LD 436, An Act to Prohibit State Agencies from Promoting the COVID-19 Vaccination to Children

To: Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and the members of the Health and Human Services Committee

The Maine Chapter of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (MC-FFRF) is writing AGAINST LD 436, An Act to Prohibit State Agencies from Promoting the COVID-19 Vaccination to Children.

I should be shocked and disappointed that such testimony is necessary, but it is a sign of the times that I am not. One of the most effective tools we have to combat COVID-19 is vaccination. The approval and widespread distribution of COVID-19 vaccines has reduced the severity of illness, prevented hospitalizations, and saved lives. LD 436 is not only harmful but also shortsighted, as it disregards public health, undermines efforts to control the spread of the virus, and puts our children at unnecessary risk.

Children are less likely to experience severe illness compared to adults, but COVID-19 can still lead to serious complications including hospitalization, long-term health issues, and even death. By prohibiting the promotion of COVID-19 vaccines for children, we are denying them a safe and effective preventive measure. Protecting children from the worst outcomes of COVID-19 should be a top priority. Restricting vaccine promotion limits this protection.

One of the most important reasons to vaccinate children is to reduce the overall spread of the virus. Children can be asymptomatic carriers. This is especially concerning when children interact with vulnerable populations who may be more at risk of severe illness. Vaccinating children reduces the number of potential carriers and limits the ability of the virus to spread. Prohibiting the promotion of COVID-19 vaccines for children undermines efforts to achieve widespread immunity, which is essential to controlling the pandemic. Without widespread vaccination of children, the goal of controlling COVID-19 will be out of reach.

The vaccines authorized for use in children have undergone rigorous clinical trials. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continue to monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines through ongoing surveillance and studies. The benefits of vaccination far outweigh the risks, which are rare and typically mild, such as temporary soreness at the injection site or mild fever.

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Prohibiting the promotion of these vaccines ignores the scientific consensus and evidence that supports their use. Public health guidance should be based on the best available science, which overwhelmingly supports the vaccination of children as an important measure to protect public health. We cannot let political or ideological motivations override the science that has been instrumental in reducing the harm caused by COVID-19.

Vaccinating children against COVID-19 is a critical step in ensuring that schools can remain open and that children can have a more normal educational experience.

Prohibiting the promotion of COVID-19 vaccines for children could create a situation in which children who are not vaccinated may be more likely to contract and spread COVID-19, leading to more outbreaks in schools and further disruptions to education. Promoting vaccination among children is an essential part of ensuring that children are not deprived of the educational and social experiences they need to thrive.

One of the great challenges has been the spread of misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines. Many people are distrustful of vaccines due to misleading or false information. By prohibiting the promotion of COVID-19 vaccines for children, we undermine public health campaigns and allow misinformation to get traction. The promotion of COVID-19 vaccines for children is not just about providing accurate information; it's also about countering harmful myths and promoting trust in the healthcare system. Public health officials and medical professionals have a responsibility to provide children and their families with the ability to make informed decisions. Preventing the promotion of vaccines contradicts this goal.

The decision to vaccinate children is not just about individual health; it is a collective responsibility to protect the most vulnerable members of society.

Prohibiting the promotion of COVID-19 vaccines for children prioritizes a narrow view of individual freedom over the broader public health goal of minimizing harm to everyone. Vaccinating children is one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and ensure that we can protect those who are most at risk.

For these reasons, the MC-FFRF asks the committee to vote "OUGHT NOT TO PASS" to ensure that accurate, science-based information is available to everyone. Thank you for your time and consideration.

-Ray Vensel, President