

Testimony of Brynne O’Neal  
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**In SUPPORT of LD 2071, “An Act to Expand Access to Vaccines Approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration by Allowing Pharmacists to Prescribe, Dispense and Administer Vaccines and Require Insurance Coverage” and  
In SUPPORT of LD 2146 “An Act to Increase Access to Critical Vaccinations”**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services  
Hearing: February 10, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

Dear Chair Bailey, Chair Mathieson, and distinguished members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services,

On behalf of more than 4,000 registered nurses and health care professionals providing patient care in our state, **the Maine State Nurses Association/National Nurses United (MSNA) urges the Committee to support LD 2071 and LD 2146.**

Nurses know how crucial vaccination is to public health. MSNA has been appalled to watch our federal public health agencies cast doubt on vaccine safety and adopt unscientific anti-vaccine policies.<sup>1</sup> These bills would help ensure Maine residents can access vaccinations according to recommendations by recognized professional organizations based on scientific research on vaccine safety and efficacy.

These bills will help limit the harm from a series of unscientific anti-vaccine decisions at the federal level. Last year, Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. removed all 17 members of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and replaced many positions with people holding anti-vaccine views.<sup>2</sup> Last month, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention changed recommendations for six routine childhood vaccines that are safe and effective at preventing serious disease and death.<sup>3</sup> These important vaccines are now recommended only for children at high risk of serious illness or after “shared clinical decision-

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<sup>1</sup> National Nurses United, (Sept 22, 2025), Nurses decry CDC advisory panel’s weakened vaccine policies, <https://www.nationalnursesunited.org/press/nurses-decry-cdc-advisory-panels-weakened-vaccine-policies>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*; Jenco, M. (June 12, 2025), AAP: New CDC vaccine advisers a ‘radical departure’ from committee’s mission, <https://publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/32379>.

<sup>3</sup> See Allen, A. Fortiér, J, (Jan 9, 2026), The CDC just sidelined these childhood vaccines. Here's what they prevent, NPR <https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2026/01/09/nx-s1-5671750/cdc-childhood-vaccines-universal-recommendation-rotavirus-hepatitis>.

making” between doctors and parents.<sup>4</sup> These changes create unnecessary barriers to what should be routine vaccinations to protect the public health. Now, the chair of the committee has said that ACIP is reconsidering all vaccination recommendations.<sup>5</sup>

Nurses recognize that the scientific evidence is abundantly clear: vaccines protect our patients’ health and save lives. Nurses see firsthand the illness, suffering, and devastation when patients contract preventable infectious diseases because they are not vaccinated. Covid-19 vaccines alone prevented over 14.4 million deaths in the first year of the pandemic alone and continue to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, Long Covid cases, and deaths.<sup>6</sup> Routine childhood vaccinations are estimated to have saved 1,129,000 lives and prevented 508 million cases of illness and 32 million hospitalizations among children born between 1994 and 2023.<sup>7</sup>

**MSNA thanks the sponsors of these bills for protecting Mainers from the impact of unscientific anti-vaccine policies at the federal level and urges the committee to support LD 2071 and LD 2146.**

Sincerely,



Brynne O’Neal

Regulatory Policy Specialist

Maine State Nurses Association / National Nurses United

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<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Schreiber M, (Feb 1, 2026), US committee is reconsidering all vaccine recommendations, Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/feb/01/vaccine-recommendations-acip>.

<sup>6</sup> (2022), Lives saved by COVID-19 vaccines. *J Paediatr Child Health*, 58: 2129-2129. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jpc.16213>.

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<sup>7</sup> Zhou F, et al. Health and Economic Benefits of Routine Childhood Immunizations in the Era of the Vaccines for Children Program - United States, 1994-2023. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. 2024 Aug 8;73(31):682-685. doi: 10.15585/mmwr.mm7331a2.