



**Testimony of Maine Public Health Association in Support of:
LD 2146: An Act to Increase Access to Critical Vaccinations**

Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
Room 220, Cross State Office Building
February 10, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services. My name is Rebecca Boulos, and I am the executive director of Maine Public Health Association.

MPHA is the state's oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. We represent nearly 950 individual and 80 organizational members across the state. MPHA works to advance the health of all people and places in Maine through advocacy, education, partnerships, and support for the public health workforce. We are not tied to a national agenda, which means we are responsive to the needs of Maine's communities, and we take that responsibility seriously.

MPHA supports LD 2146: "An Act to Increase Access to Critical Vaccinations," specifically the provision that the Maine Vaccine Board can request state funding to cover the costs of vaccines for children who qualify for vaccines under the Vaccines for Children Program, if federal funding for the Vaccines for Children Program is no longer available.

The safety, efficacy, and cost-effectiveness of routine childhood vaccines have been well-established and are supported by sound, scientific studies. Increased immunization rates have contributed to a reduction in U.S. morbidity and mortality associated with infectious diseases. Since 1993, routine childhood vaccinations have saved over 1,000,000 lives and \$2.7 trillion in societal costs.¹

Fortunately, Maine is one of the states with the strongest immunization laws. In 2020, 72.5% of Maine voters, with majorities in [every Maine county](#) voted to [reject a people's veto effort](#) to repeal our strong vaccine laws for school entry. In other words, Maine voters overwhelmingly support strong immunization requirements to ensure safe learning environments and communities for everyone.

Data from immunization surveys indicate that states with stronger immunization laws have higher immunization rates and sufficient herd immunity to prevent outbreaks.² Indeed, our current laws are helping keep Maine communities safe from vaccine-preventable diseases. However, federal actions and communications have started to weaken public trust and adoption of vaccines. [Changes to the membership](#) of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the [Childhood Immunization Schedule](#) underscore the threats to vaccine uptake, augmented by the [growing measles outbreak across the country](#). Measles is a vaccine-preventable disease that can lead to serious complications and potentially death. It was declared eradicated in the U.S. 26 years ago. In 2025, 2,276 cases were reported to the U.S. CDC; as of February 5, 2026, 733 cases have been reported and there are already two new outbreaks (49 outbreaks were reported in 2025). Last year, three people died from this entirely preventable disease.

In 2025, there was a pattern of the Executive Branch not spending funds as Congress intended by changing programs that were funded, rescinding grants, and firing staff. While there was language inserted into the FY 26

Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill that codifies funding levels, there is reason to prepare for a scenario where there is no longer federal funding for vaccines. LD 2146 addresses that very real threat by allowing the Maine Vaccine Board to request state funding if there are no longer funds available from the federal government.

The provision in the bill that allows the Maine Vaccine Board to request state funding to cover the costs of vaccines for children is an integral part of bolstering Maine's already-strong vaccine laws, and we hope you will support it. Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Zhou F, Jatlaoui TC, Leidner AJ, 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;73:682–685.

² Richwine CJ, Dor A, Moghtaderi A. [Do stricter immunization laws improve coverage? Evidence from the repeal of non-medical exemptions for school mandated vaccines](#). National Bureau of Economic Research. Working paper 25847. May 2019.