

Janet T. Mills  
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.  
Commissioner



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May 5, 2021

Senator Joseph Baldacci, Chair  
Representative Ann Matlack, Chair  
Members, Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government  
#100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

**Re: LD 817 - *Resolve, To Establish the COVID-19 Review Commission***

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on LD 817- *Resolve, To Establish the COVID-19 Review Commission*. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) opposes the bill for several reasons.

First, the State is still in the middle of the pandemic response, including the largest vaccination effort in Maine's history. Asking DHHS to staff this commission during these unprecedented efforts would serve to further stretch already-exhausted capacity. While the Legislature is welcome to staff their own work, we strenuously oppose the proposal to have DHHS staff this work.

Second, as noted above – the response to COVID-19 is ongoing. Maine DHHS and Maine CDC routinely conduct "after action" reviews of our work, but those can only be fully informed once a mission is complete. A review of the COVID-19 response held now will not be able to take into account the full reality of COVID-19 and the results of efforts by the State to combat its effects.

As of writing this letter, Maine remains the top state for percent of the population who is fully vaccinated. Maine continues to see comparatively low case rates. Additionally, there has been no shortage of engagement with the legislature as our staff participate in public hearings, work sessions, and presentations to various Committees of the Legislature and engaging the public and stakeholders in robust, open, and transparent ways.

Given these concerns, we respectfully suggest you vote ought not to pass on LD 817.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Jeanne M. Lambrew', is written over the printed name.

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.  
Commissioner

JML/klv