



Testimony in OPPOSITION to LD 436, An Act to Prohibit State Agencies from Promoting the COVID-19 Vaccination to Children

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
March 31, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Northe Saunders, and I serve as the Director of Maine Families for Vaccines and the Executive Director of SAFE Communities Coalition. We work to promote vaccine confidence and protect families from vaccine-preventable disease through strong, evidence-based public health policy.

I am here today to respectfully urge you to vote "Ought Not to Pass" on LD 436. Anti-vaccine legislation like this should not advance in the legislature and has no place in Maine.

This bill would prohibit state agencies from promoting the COVID-19 vaccine to anyone under 18—including through public websites or educational materials. In effect, it would censor accurate, science-based information and make it harder for Maine families to find trustworthy answers to their questions about COVID-19 vaccination.

As the father of three young children, I want accurate, trustworthy information when it comes to my family's health. Like many parents, I'm not looking for pressure—I'm looking for clarity. I want to understand the benefits, the risks, and the facts so I can make the best decision for my kids. That's especially true for something as often politicized as COVID-19.

Empowering families like ours to make informed decisions about their health requires access to information we can use. If we don't respond to people's questions with good, accessible information, we create voids that get filled with confusion, speculation, or

outright misinformation. Public agencies have a responsibility to provide the public with reliable, relevant resources—not to stay silent when people are looking for guidance.

Right now, Maine's state agency maintains publicly accessible, evidence-based information about COVID-19 vaccination—not targeted campaigns, but simple, factual resources that parents, educators, providers, and even teens can use to make informed choices.

This bill doesn't solve a problem—it creates one. It adds confusion. It interferes with good public health communication. And it moves us further away from a culture where people feel empowered to take charge of their health.

On behalf of the families, providers, and community leaders we represent, I respectfully urge you to reject LD 436.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Northe Saunders
Director, Maine Families for Vaccines
Portland