

Maine Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MAINE

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Executive Committee

President

Brian Youth, MD, FAAP

Vice President

Anne Coates, MD, FAAP

Treasurer

Christopher Motyl, DO, FAAP

Jeffrey Stone, DO, FAAP

Secretary

Genevieve Whiting, MD, FAAP

Immediate Past President

Laura Blaisdell, MD, MPH, FAAP

Board of Directors

Mahmuda Ahmed, MD, FAAP

Joseph Anderson, DO, FAAP

Rebecca Brakeley, MD, FAAP

Amy Buczkowski, MD, FAAP

Melissa Burch, MD, FAAP

Adrienne Carmack, MD, FAAP

Gabriel Civiello, MD, FAAP

Alyssa Goodwin, MD, FAAP

Allison Grover, MD*

Deborah Q. Hagler, MD, MPH, FAAP

Dan Hale, MD, FAAP

Jennifer Jewell, MD, MS, FAAP

Stephanie Joy, MD, FAAP

Emily Keller, MD, FAAP

Alton Kremer, MD, PhD, FAAP

Michele LaBotz, MD, FAAP

Lawrence Losey, MD, FAAP

Valerie O'Hara, DO, FAAP

Calvin Schaffer, MD*

Austin Steward**

Jeffrey Stone, DO, FAAP

Andrea Tracy, MD, FAAP

Lara Walsh, MD, FAAP

Jyotika Vallurupalli**

Margaret Zamboni, DO, FAAP

*Resident Board Representatives

**Medical Student Representatives

Staff

Dee Kerry, BS

Executive Director

Emily Belanger, RN, BSN

Education & Membership Manager

Madeleine DesFosses, BA

Public Health & Advocacy Manager

Tiffany Harrington, MBA

Development Director

30 Association Drive, Box 190

Manchester, ME 04351

office: 207-622-3374

www.maineaap.org

Testimony against LD 871 by Sydney R. Sewall, MD MPH (Hallowell)

Sen. Ingwersen, Rep. Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Syd Sewall, and I'm testifying today on behalf of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (Maine AAP), an organization of 300+ primary care physicians, Nurse Practitioners, and pediatric subspecialists distributed throughout our state.

You may recall that the first group to receive COVID vaccines in January 2021 was health care workers. Most were happy to get protected, while others only were vaccinated only because of a mandate. At that point early in the pandemic, the data on vaccine efficacy showed that it gave protection against both mild and severe disease and decreased the infectivity of vaccinated individuals. Mandates were unpopular but justified by epidemiologic data showing that receiving a vaccine protected those around you as well as yourself.

The emergence of the Delta variant in the summer of 2021, followed by Omicron and its subvariants over the following years, altered that landscape. These variants have had increasing ability to evade spike protein antibodies. While vaccinated individuals gain protection against serious illness, they can still become infected and spread the COVID virus to their contacts. Recognizing that mandates no longer served their intended purpose, CDC recommended eliminating them 2 years ago.

While current science recognizes the benefits from the use of COVID vaccines – especially in vulnerable populations – it does not support COVID vaccine mandates. It is unlikely that either a new vaccine or some further viral mutations will alter the situation in the foreseeable future.

Our concern with this bill is not related to science – but to the insertion of politics into public health decision making. Since there are no mandates currently in place in Maine, the bill serves no obvious purpose. The motivating force in the background appears to be misinformation and anti-vaccine sentiment. It is unfortunate that vaccine policy in general – and COVID vaccine in particular – has devolved into a partisan issue.

The Maine Chapter of AAP recommends an “ought not to pass” vote on LD 871.

Sincerely,

Sydney R. Sewall, MD MPH
Hallowell