



Maine Medical
Association



TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
AND
THE MAINE OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

In Opposition to

**LD 174- An Act to Restore Religious Exemptions to Immunization Requirements and
727 An Act to Repeal Certain Immunization Requirements for Schools**

Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
Room 208, Cross Building, Augusta, Maine
Monday, April 7, 2025

Good Morning, Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Austin Vaughan, and I am a medical student at the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to LD 174, An Act to Restore Religious Exemptions to Immunization Requirements, and LD 727, An Act to Repeal Certain Immunization Requirements for Schools, on behalf of the Maine Medical Association and Maine Osteopathic Association.

The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing more than 4,000 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA's mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people. The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State.

The MMA and MOA's legislative committees have joined to advocate with one voice against LD 174 and 727.

Just last month, the Maine Medical Association adopted a policy reaffirming its commitment to science, evidence-based medicine, and public health.¹ In this statement, the MMA reaffirmed its support for the scientific method and our collective societal accomplishments to advance public health and health care in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. Vaccines is one example of such an incredible scientific accomplishment that has drastically improved public health.

¹<https://mainephysicians.org/blog/mma-adopts-policy-reaffirming-support-of-science-evidence-based-medicine-and-public-health-in-current-political-discourse/>

Moving forward with these bills would oppose scientifically backed healthcare and weaken Maine's immunization requirements. This would increase the risk of vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks in schools and healthcare settings, which is a very real possibility, as can be seen by recent measles outbreaks in Texas and other parts of the country with high exemption rates. Maine currently has one of the strongest vaccine laws in the country, and evidence shows that it is working. Since the passing of stronger vaccination laws, the number of nonmedical exemptions has dropped dramatically. These lower numbers ensure a healthier population and prove that the State's vaccination laws work.

Passing these bills would reject this progress and instead endanger public health. It would endanger children, educators, healthcare workers, and immunocompromised individuals across the state. The voters of Maine have already supported these vaccination laws when, in 2020, 73% of Maine voters overwhelmingly upheld our vaccine law at the ballot box after it was challenged by referendum.² So, opposing LD 174 and 727 is supporting science, the will of the people of Maine, and a healthier population. For these reasons, we hope you will oppose these bills.

Thank you for considering the thoughts of Maine's physicians about LD 174 and 727. Again, we urge you to oppose these bills.

Thank you,

Austin Vaughan

² [Maine Question 1, Religious and Philosophical Vaccination Exemptions Referendum \(March 2020\) - Ballotpedia.](#)