

Maine Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MAINE

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



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Testimony in opposition to LD 174 & LD 727— Sydney R. Sewall, MD (Hallowell)

Sen. Rafferty, Rep. ^{urom}Moody, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

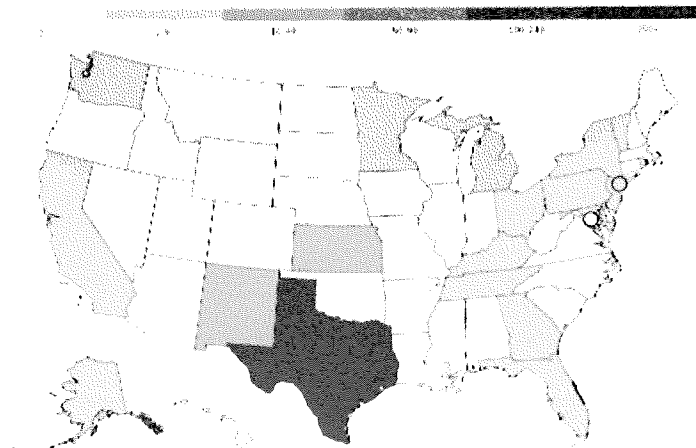
I am a board-certified Pediatrician with over 40 years of experience treating children in the Central Maine region. I've been around long enough to have lost patients to what are now vaccine-preventable diseases. My personal experience as a doctor -- along with continued reading to keep up to date -- makes me a strong proponent of vaccines.

I was involved in the 2019 effort to pass the legislation that strengthened the rules governing school immunization requirements. During that debate, we learned that there are no religions that prohibit vaccinations. Pediatricians successfully argued that vaccine mandates were necessary to protect students from preventable illnesses and LD 798 passed.

The following year, I was with the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics when we joined a parent-led coalition that successfully defeated the anti-vaccine referendum that wanted to repeal that bill.

Today we are going over old ground -- the Legislature in 2019 and electorate in 2020 agreed with Maine pediatricians that vaccinations are safe and effective, and an important tool needed to keep schools free from preventable diseases. The science continues to support the safety and efficacy of vaccines while the danger facing unprotected children has escalated.

This map shows the location of measles cases in March. In 2019, we used to say that vaccine preventable illnesses were a **plane ride** away -- now we can say they are just a **car ride** away. The risk of children being hospitalized (or worse) if population immunity falls is not theoretical.



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The outbreak in Texas began after vaccine misinformation targeted a specific population. A similar event, also with tragic consequences, occurred in Samoa a decade ago. It is frightening to see that the purveyors of falsehoods are now in positions of authority in Washington -- their misleading statements are adding strength to the anti-vaccine movement.

The rules established in Maine after 2019 have been effective in maintaining the high levels of immunity needed to keep our schools safe. Repealing them would put Maine at risk.

I urge the committee to vote "ought not to pass" for both of these bills.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sydney R. Sewall".

Sydney R. Sewall, MD MPH
Instructor in Pediatrics – Maine-Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency
(Augusta & Waterville)

Maine Chapter, AAP