



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF:

LD 2071 “An Act to Expand Access To Vaccines Approved by the United States Food And Drug Administration by Allowing Pharmacists to Prescribe, Dispense and Administer Vaccines and Require Insurance Coverage”

*THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH COVERAGE,
INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES*

Sen. Bailey, Rep. Mathieson, and esteemed members of the HCIFS Committee, my name is Amy Arata and I represent House District 104. I’m pleased to be a cosponsor of LD 2071, “An Act to Expand Access To Vaccines Approved by the United States Food And Drug Administration by Allowing Pharmacists to Prescribe, Dispense and Administer Vaccines and Require Insurance Coverage”.

In 2019, I made the difficult decision to vote in opposition of mandated vaccination for school attendance. My position hasn’t changed, and I still support medical freedom. Just as the government shouldn’t require vaccination, it should also not prohibit it. The current statute creates a barrier that will prohibit some Mainers from obtaining the vaccinations that they want.

This bill reduces barriers to care by allowing pharmacists to prescribe, dispense, and administer vaccines that have been licensed by the FDA. It removes the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices as a gatekeeper for care. Having fewer gatekeepers will allow more people who want vaccines the ability to get them. Maine has a physician shortage, and I’m sure you’ve heard from constituents who have had difficulty finding a doctor who is taking new patients. If one needs a vaccine for travel or for a job, he shouldn’t have to take up a valuable appointment slot that someone else needs more. That is, if an appointment can even be made. Not everybody has insurance or a doctor. Allowing pharmacists to give more vaccines will make it more affordable for those who pay out of pocket.

I have experienced a situation when vaccines were needed quickly for a job. When I worked for the Naval Blood Research Laboratory at Boston University, I needed the Hepatitis B vaccine series in order to more safely handle blood. This was a 3 shot series and would take up a lot of time and money to obtain if I had to go through a primary care physician. I would probably not have been able to accept the job if I didn't have another means of obtaining the vaccines. Allowing pharmacists to give vaccines will help people in similar situations.

Note that nothing in this bill changes the Maine law that requires immunization of students against 9 diseases (Varicella, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Polio, Meningococcal Meningitis). That statute is in a completely different area of Maine law, Title 20-A. However, this bill will make it easier for students and parents who choose to comply with the law, or who want to obtain vaccines against all 11 diseases recommended by the CDC under Secretary Kennedy (previous 9 plus Haemophilus influenzae type B and HPV) or vaccines recommended under the previous administration (previous 11 plus Hepatitis A&B, Influenza, RSV, Rotavirus, Covid). This bill does not require anybody to obtain any vaccines, but allows them to conveniently and inexpensively choose those who wish to obtain.

I am specifically in support of page 2 of this bill regarding administration of vaccines, but I am neither for nor against mandated insurance coverage. Since many vaccines are already covered by insurance, the impact of this bill may be negligible. However, it would be a good strategy for the committee to work together to carefully consider any fiscal notes that may be attached to this bill as you consider its likelihood of passage as an emergency measure.

Thank you for your time and I urge you to pass this bill unanimously in support of public and personal health as well as individual medical freedom.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy B. Arata". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Amy B. Arata
State Representative