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President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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**Testimony of Senate President Mattie Daughtry in support of
LD 2146, "An Act to Increase Access to Critical Vaccinations"
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services
February 10, 2026**

Good afternoon, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services, my name is Mattie Daughtry. I serve as President of the Maine Senate and proudly represent Senate District 23, including Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth. I am honored to present LD 2146, "An Act to Increase Access to Critical Vaccinations." This bill not only ensures overall access to vaccinations, but goes beyond by protecting Maine's pharmacists who are the front line of adult vaccine administration across our state.

For many Maine people, a familiar pharmacist is not just a provider, but also a trusted neighbor. They are someone in their community who they see weekly, who knows their name, their family, their story. When we protect Maine pharmacists, we are protecting those relationships and the quality healthcare that flows from them.

Evidence-based, accessible vaccines are an absolute necessity for Maine's public health. Vaccines save lives, prevent the spread of serious illness, and protect our most vulnerable neighbors. Behind every administered vaccination is a parent trying to keep their child safe, a grandparent hoping to stay healthy while attending a graduation, or a friend, family member, or even colleague doing everything they can to protect someone. As mundane as getting a vaccination can sound, it is something that we cannot take for granted. Access to vaccinations allows people to live their lives freely — with protection, peace of mind, and, in many cases, lifesaving care. If federal actions create uncertainty or retreat from long-standing, science-based standards, Maine must have the authority to step in and ensure that access to critical vaccinations remains clear, stable, and grounded in evidence.

LD 2146 builds on the ongoing commitment of this Legislature to universal vaccination, including on LD 93, which untethered state vaccine policy from federal mandates. Going a step further by establishing that Maine may accept the recommendations of trusted outside organizations so long as that recommendation "preserves and strengthens access to vaccines as part of the routine standard of care; is based on evidence from scientific and public health experts; and is not intended to weaken or replace evidence-based immunization standards". In addition, this bill allows the Maine Vaccine Board to request funding through the budget process, allowing Maine to meet its commitment to universal vaccination even if our federal partners' commitment fails. No older Mainer, child, or family should bear the cost of political instability when it comes to their health.

Finally, the bill clarifies the malpractice liability for pharmacists administering vaccines recommended through this state process rather than by the federal government, ensuring that they are able to continue

their important work. Pharmacists play a vital role in Maine's health care system, particularly in rural and underserved communities where they are often the most accessible health care professional for communities. During public health emergencies and everyday care alike, pharmacists have over and over again stepped up to provide timely, trusted vaccination services. We have asked them to step forward when Maine has needed them most, and they did. It is now our responsibility to ensure they are not penalized for caring for the critical work they do. Clarifying liability protections is essential to ensure they can continue this work without fear of undue legal risk—and will allow us to keep skilled pharmacists practicing in Maine, where their expertise is urgently needed.

This legislation also complements other efforts before this Legislature, including Representative Cluchey's work to strengthen Maine's vaccination framework. Together, these bills reflect a shared goal: protecting public health, reinforcing evidence-based standards, and ensuring Maine people can access the care they need without disruption. In the interest of supporting this shared effort, Colleen has distributed an amendment to LD 2146 on my behalf, which will align its list of trusted sources of vaccination recommendations with the list used in Representative Cluchey's LD 2171 as well as other states across the country.

Advancing LD 2146 would provide a more complete and resilient approach to vaccine access in our state. I urge this committee to vote Ought to Pass.

Thank you.