

Honorable Gary A. Connor
10 Patterson Drive
Kennebunk, ME 04043

04 MAY April 2021

Testimony in Favor of LD745: "An Act To Strengthen Maine's Public Health by Expanding Access to Certain Health Programs and Services"

Dear Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Gary Connor from Kennebunk and I speak today in support of, and with great thanks to Representative Millett, for bringing LD745 forward. I am presently a member of the Maine Vaccine Board, and it is important to note that **my testimony is mine alone and does not represent a position of the Maine Vaccine Board.**

From 2006 to 2010, I proudly served the constituents of Maine House District 140, and previously sat on this committee and then the Appropriations and Financial Affairs committee. (Off the record, I apologize that I cannot present this testimony live, due to a family emergency, as there are many familiar faces, including my former HHS Chair, Representative Perry, my good Irish friend from Lewiston, and of course the big little brother from Bangor serving here today. As this is not my first time returning to this committee to testify, I sadly did not send some snacks/goodies to the committee room).

In 2008 I sponsored LD1408 "An Act To Establish the Universal Childhood Immunization Program". This bill was signed into law by Governor Baldacci in 2010 and a recently completed impact analysis shows great savings in the 10 years that have transpired. In fact, the data from the Maine Vaccine Board report shows savings of 21% (April 2019- March 2020) to 30.4% (April 2016-March 2017) with approximate annual savings of \$4 million per year.*

The effort to create a public-private partnership through LD1408 took many years and several key members from that coalition remain deeply involved with the Maine Vaccine Board today. You will likely hear testimony from many of those individuals, some in favor, some opposed, and likely some "neither", but I believe in all instances those testifying believe that a path similar to what presently exists in children is possible for an adult population and that the **same savings and improved implementation efficiencies** can be achieved.

During the original debate more than a decade ago, I made the strong argument that the financial barriers to immunization must be removed. It is my firm belief, particularly as we find ourselves in the lingering midst of a global pandemic, that this is true for adults as much as children.

Maine will not be the first state to take on such an initiative, and it is my understanding that several states have implemented adult vaccine programs and are seeing improved

immunization rates and, due to the ability to purchase vaccines at the governmental rate, achieving cost savings for the payers.

The current childhood program receives federal support from the Vaccine for Children program (“VFC kids”) and it is likely that a similar federal program known as “317 Funds” could support under/uninsured adults. The department can best answer questions about that program, but having our private payers and the federal government work together to protect all Mainers is a smart approach to making immunization readily available for all.

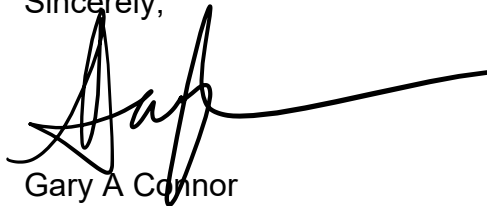
In the final analysis, the time to act on making preventable diseases obsolete is now. The concept brought forward by Representative Millett is the right step in saving lives and money.

I ask for the unanimous support of LD745.

To the degree that my past experiences working LD1408 are useful to the committee, I am happy to be available for the work session and will gladly respond to any questions from the committee. I will make my contact information available to Clerk Withee

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary A. Connor', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gary A Connor

*Maine Vaccine Board Impact Analysis| September 22, 2020