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Testimony in Opposition:

L.D. 867 An Act To Prohibit Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations for 5 Years To Allow for Safety Testing and Investigations into Reproductive Harm

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Dr. Laura Blaisdell and I reside in South Portland. I have been a practicing pediatrician in Maine over 15 years. I attended University of Minnesota Medical School for my medical doctorate and degree in public health and completed my pediatrics training at the Barbara Bush Children's Hospital at Maine Medical Center. I am currently the Vice-President of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Pediatricians are trained to administer vaccines as part of the foundation of preventative care for children and adolescents. In my years of practice, I have had 1,000s of conversations with parents and administered as many vaccines. In determining what vaccines were appropriate and not contraindicated I call on the extensive body of knowledge, expertise of and research by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the American Academy of Pediatrics. CDC sets the immunization schedules based on ACIP's recommendations. The childhood and adolescent schedules are also then approved by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. The adult schedule is also approved by the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Physicians, and the American College of Nurse-Midwives.

LD 867 is a confusing bill in that it lacks any provision in protecting children and adolescents and Maine citizens beyond what already exists. Since vaccines are administered to otherwise healthy people, vaccine testing and approval processes are among the most rigorously controlled and conducted processes in the medical field. Research needed to determine safety profiles are conducted prior to approval (or authorization in this case). And, in the case of the COVID-19 vaccines, the post-market analysis of vaccine safety includes an astoundingly unprecedented number of persons-- to date an estimated 3.9 billion persons over nearly 2 years. The ability of COVID-19 vaccines to affect the fertility of both women and men has been questioned on social media, but these concerns are not substantiated by the available data¹. Natural infection with SARS-CoV-2 has not caused infertility and phase 3 trials had dozens of women who became pregnant equally in both the placebo and vaccinated group. Finally, mRNA vaccines are processed near the injection site and do not cause hormonal or other biological changes that would be expected to affect either male or female infertility.

Equally confusing is how this proposed bill would add benefit to current regulatory processes and parameters of determining what vaccines should be mandatory for school or childcare entry. There are several *parameters* that are traditionally in place prior to considering vaccine requirements for school or childcare including full licensure, high parental acceptance, broad availability, physician/provider support, stable and adequate vaccine supply, addition of the vaccine to immunization information systems, adequate data to assure safety and significant uptake in the recommended population to reduce compliance burden on schools/childcare systems and provider offices, coverage for the vaccines and delivery in private health insurance plans sufficient funding to purchase the vaccine through the Vaccines for Children program. LD 867 neglects to consider these parameters. The conserved regulatory *process* for adding vaccines to school requirements allows for the discourse and deliberation required to determine a course of action with many stakeholders and considerations. LD 867 does not add to this, and in fact is overly prescriptive in lack of clear process, timeframe, and its limited scope.

On behalf of the Maine American Academy of Pediatrics, we urge you to oppose LD 867.

Thank you for your consideration.

Laura Blaisdell MD/MPH, FAAP
Vice-President, Maine AAP

¹ News & Views: Reproductive Health and COVID-19 Vaccines. Vaccine Education Center, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. May 25, 2021. <https://www.chop.edu/news/news-views-reproductive-health-and-covid-19-vaccines>