

State of Maine | 130th Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Testimony of Caroline Zimmerman on behalf of the Maine Immunization Coalition
January 11, 2021

Against:

LD 1778, “An Act To Prohibit Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations for 5 Years To Allow for Safety Testing and Investigations into Reproductive Harm”

Sponsored by Representative Quint

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Caroline Zimmerman, Chair of the Maine Immunization Coalition (MIC). MIC works to protect Maine people across their lifespan against vaccine-preventable diseases, by increasing immunization rates through information sharing, fostering collaboration, and advocacy.

MIC stands in strong opposition to LD 867, which would prohibit requiring COVID-19 vaccines for five years to allow for safety, testing, and investigations into reproductive harm. This legislation runs counter to best practice, evidence-based, public health information that is widely available.

3.92 billion people worldwide, including over 207 million people in the US, have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19.¹ Reproductive harm has not been identified as a problem associated with COVID-19 vaccines. The CDC states that “there is currently no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems (problems trying to get pregnant) in women or men.” In fact, women who get pregnant after their first shot are encouraged to get their second dose to be as protected against the virus as possible.²

Vaccines are a safe and effective tool as we work to overcome the devastating impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. mRNA vaccines have been in development for many years, allowing for the rapid development of COVID-19 specific vaccines. These vaccines have undergone the necessary and extensive testing for safety and effectiveness. As noted by the CDC, “because COVID-19 continues to be widespread, the vaccine clinical trials have been conducted more quickly than if the disease were less common.”³

Furthermore, this legislation eliminates the freedom of private employers make their own choices when it comes to vaccine mandates. Many businesses and organizations have already implemented mandates to protect workers and individuals they serve.

Lastly, this legislation is unnecessary and duplicative of existing processes we have in Maine for making decisions around certain vaccine requirements. We already have rulemaking and legislative processes; whereby public comment and legislative hearings are central to the review and discussion of any broad changes affecting schools or other public places.

On behalf of the Maine Immunization Coalition, we urge you to oppose LD 867. Thank you for considering our comments, and please do not hesitate to contact me directly at czimmerma@mainehealth.org with any follow up questions.

Caroline Zimmerman, Chair
Maine Immunization Coalition

¹ <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/01/28/960901166/how-is-the-covid-19-vaccination-campaign-going-in-your-state>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/planning-for-pregnancy.html>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/distributing/steps-ensure-safety.html>