

January 10, 2022

Good morning Senator Claxton, Representative Meyers, and esteemed committee members.

I am here today to urge you to vote "ought to pass" for LD 867, An Act to Prohibit Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations.

I am a Registered Nurse of 28 years and a Certified Case Manager (CCM) from Bryant Pond, Maine. I had been working at Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston, as a full time RN Case manager/discharge planner, until the end of October, which was Governor Mills' vaccine mandate deadline date.

I have decided not to receive the Covid-19 vaccine at this time, wanting to wait for safety testing and long-term vaccine effects.

As a result, I did lose my full time position. Less than a week after losing my position, my manager called and asked if I was available to work from home on a per diem basis. I was told they were short staffed (we lost 2 employees in my small department due to the vaccine mandate), and they needed help. I did agree to per diem work, because I am willing and able to work, but not willing to accept the Covid-19 vaccine. With this per diem position, I am not allowed in the hospital. I am not guaranteed any minimum number of hours per week at all.

With this vaccine mandate, I have lost my 40 hr/week paycheck, my insurance coverage, and workplace retirement benefits. My husband is self-employed, so I have always provided our insurance and retirement through my employer.

This is a large financial hardship for us, which you can imagine, losing a full time job. I have been working since I was 14 years old, and I have worked full time since becoming a RN in 1994. I had no idea that as a Registered Nurse I would not be able to provide for my family at any time in my career. I have looked for RN work from home positions, but everyone I have found is requiring the Covid-19 vaccine.

Due to Governor Mills vaccine mandate, I am now unable to make a living as a RN in the state of Maine. My per diem position is not "making a living". We are considering leaving the state of Maine, if I cannot find full time employment.

Prior to the actual day of losing my full time job, the anxiety caused by the stress of knowing that I would lose my job in October if I wasn't vaccinated was overwhelming. Many of the staff at the hospital were also going through the same thing. I am unable to describe to you what Governor Mills' mandate has done to the mental health of the health care workers I know, vaccinated and unvaccinated. The decision to accept the vaccine or lose my job was a decision I had never imagined I would have to make, especially as a RN, especially in the middle of a pandemic.

I am vaccinated with all the required vaccines to work in a hospital/healthcare setting, but this vaccine is different.

As a nurse, it is my job to be my patients' advocate. My patients have choices in their healthcare decisions. My patients are allowed informed consent. My job is to support the decision my patient has made for themselves and to be non-judgmental. Sometimes my patients decide not to accept any treatment at all, and that is their choice. I am a very good nurse, and I am a very good advocate for my patients.

With the new Covid-19 vaccines, which are injections the same as other medical procedures, I feel I should be allowed the same rights as my patients are allowed, to be given fully informed consent prior to accepting this vaccine. These vaccines are new, and I feel that I need time for safety testing and observation of vaccine adverse effects to be studied and published. That is not at all unreasonable and should actually be mandatory. I cannot give informed consent without this information. Please give science time to study vaccine safety and harm.

Please vote "ought to pass" for LD 867. I thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Sincerely,

Stacy McCracken, RN, BSN, CCM