



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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To: Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
From: Becky Smith, Director of Government and Community Relations
Bsmith@mccs.me.edu
Re: LD 867 An Act To Prohibit Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations for 5 Years To
Allow for Safety Testing and Investigations into Reproductive Harm
Date: January 11, 2022

Please accept this testimony in opposition to LD 867, *An Act To Prohibit Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations for 5 Years To Allow for Safety Testing and Investigations into Reproductive Harm* on behalf of the Maine Community College System.

The Maine Community College System requires the COVID-19 vaccine, as well as boosters for eligible students, faculty and staff who will be on campuses. This requirement is the backbone of our comprehensive COVID-19 safety protocols and allows us to provide in-person education while keeping our students, faculty and staff as safe as we can.

We are proud that our on-campus community had a 98.4% vaccination rate during the fall semester, and we were able to successfully finish the semester with minimal COVID interruptions.

It is notable that, under agreements reached with our unions, employees have the option to submit to regular testing, at MCCS' expense, in lieu of vaccination, but only a few employees selected the testing option. In addition, in compliance with applicable law, MCCS provides medical exemptions from the vaccination requirement to eligible students, who are required to submit to regular testing. For those subject to testing, a negative test result is required in order to access MCCS facilities.

Due to our partnership with the University of Maine System's testing lab, PCR tests are available at six of our seven campuses for unvaccinated employees as well as at 5 of our campuses for employees and students who may be concerned that they have COVID and are having issues securing a test off-campus.

Any law that prohibits us from requiring vaccines or booster shots will remove our most effective safety measure and threatens our ability to offer live, in-person training and courses. We have seen around the country that outbreaks interfere with educational delivery and negatively impact the health and safety of our communities. Now is not the time to limit the educational opportunities for the vast majority of our students.

For the above reasons, we ask the committee to give this bill an Ought Not to Pass vote.