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March 13, 2019

Testimony Opposing LD 798

An Act To Protect Maine Children and Students from Preventable Diseases by Repealing Certain Exemptions from the Laws Governing Immunization Requirements

Good afternoon Sen. Millett, Rep. Kornfield and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. My name is Dave Miramant, and I proudly represent all of the people of Appleton, Camden, Criehaven, Cushing, Friendship, Hope, Isle au Haut, Matinicus, Muscle Ridge Islands, North Haven, Owl's Head, Rockland, Rockport, South Thomaston, St. George, Thomaston, Union, Vinalhaven and Warren in the Maine Senate.

I am here today to oppose LD 798, "An Act To Protect Maine Children and Students from Preventable Diseases by Repealing Certain Exemptions from the Laws Governing Immunization Requirements."

There are three basic reasons for individuals, or their parents or guardians, to refuse vaccinations. There have always been religious objections which the government has chosen to honor. If a religion practices beliefs that come into conflict with the laws of the land, the government has to decide if the religious objections are valid. In the case of refusing vaccinations, this has been settled and is allowed. Since this is the case, no person, business or educational institution should be able to discriminate unilaterally.

When the ingredients of vaccines became public information, many people began to question the benefits versus the risks. It turned out that manufacturers were using known poisons in vaccines, and that a previously unknown disease now well-known as autism, began to appear after severe reactions in children who were vaccinated. *While there are different causes for autism, vaccine injury is the primary one. The rates of autism in the 1970s was one in 10,000. Just three vaccines were required by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1962. The autism rate is now 1 in 36 children paralleling the increase in vaccines to 38 by the age of five.*

The manufacturers of the vaccines have resisted efforts to make changes even as the number of vaccines required before the age of two years has grown to over 20. This gives children a dose of mercury 80 times higher than the accepted safe level. This and other information about the cycles of disease opened up the philosophical exemption that allowed parents who were concerned

about their children's safety and wellbeing to opt-out of the mandated vaccination schedule and pick schedules that are much safer.

When people follow the law and make choices that are theirs to make, there can be no justification to allow fear to condone discrimination. While the theory of herd immunity has not been proven, herd mentality has. Experience with vaccines has not given cause to allow discrimination in education based on herd mentality.

If we are to look at herd mentality further, the proponents of this bill say that they need a critical mass for the effects to work. They say that the number to ensure herd immunity is 95 percent. Even with the exemption system in place Maine already has a 95 percent vaccination rate in children. This alone is a good reason to continue to allow the exemption, but further examination shows that the ongoing recommendations for maintaining this herd immunity are not being met. The life of a vaccine is finite and needs to be re-administered, according to the drug companies. This means the vast majority of adults in the United States (around 150 million) are not vaccine-protected from these diseases. So the schedule for vaccinating adults is seldom followed, leaving us not even remotely close to herd immunity in the U.S., and yet we are not having outbreaks of the diseases that are at the heart of the sponsors' fears. This leaves room for the continuation of exemptions so that even folks who choose vaccination can choose those known to be safe, free from toxins and administer them on a schedule that allows the health of the child to be maintained.

The debate about vaccines has been one-sided because of both the amount of money that the manufacturers have to spend and continue to make — expected to be \$60 billion by 2020 — and the lack of adequate science and studies on safety. Unlike any other drugs, these manufacturers have been exempted from responsibility for their products and that liability has been put on the backs of the taxpayers. The Vaccine Compensation Board has paid out over \$4 billion in vaccine injuries since it was put into place. The reporting of vaccine complications by doctors is voluntary. A Harvard study found that fewer than one percent of vaccine adverse events are even reported, therefore leaving this compensation barely representing the injuries that exist.

As for the issue of safety, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has spent tens of billions of dollars promoting and purchasing vaccines. Yet, there have been no funds allocated to study what injuries are caused by vaccines. Usually this would be a minimum requirement for allowing a product or drug to be used, but in this case there is no push by the government for better data. DHHS's claim that vaccines are safe comes from studying just one vaccine, MMR. Dr. Thompson, a scientist at the CDC for almost two decades, described in 2014 how the CDC concealed a finding that healthy children who received the MMR vaccine may be eight times more likely to develop autism than those without the vaccine. The CDC has not addressed a study which found a 300 percent increased rate of autism among newborns getting the HepB vaccine at birth versus those who have not. The list of concerns with vaccines and toxins including aluminum used in them is long. Some of the "conclusive" studies were done over only a period of 5 days after a vaccination and then stopped. None of their "studies" have included a control group.

Members of the board at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that licenses vaccines have pharmaceutical connections and have made millions on these vaccines. Three out of five FDA advisory members who voted to approve the rotavirus vaccine had financial ties to pharmaceutical companies. There are currently over 1,000 pharma lobbyists in Washington, DC compared to virtually no vaccine safety lobbyists.

After seeing an alarming decrease in the health of the children they vaccinated and the drastic increase in autism, some doctors have created a safer vaccine schedule. Dr. Paul Thomas, a Dartmouth trained physician, has vaccinated over 2,000 children with this protocol and has had no autism. There normally would be 50 cases in 2,000. We need to allow parents the choice to pick safer options for their children.

For all these reasons, parents are deeply concerned about the lack of adequate science and studies done on vaccine safety, and the vast increase in autism and numerous other conditions that have coincided with increases in vaccine schedules. Many, while not opposed to vaccinations, are unwilling to turn their choice and protection over to this convoluted system until these issues are addressed. The life of their child depends on this choice.

The right to free speech is another consequence of the tobacco playbook that is being used against those who would have a choice about what and when any medication is put in their bodies. The social media platforms that we count on for open discussion are being censored based on the attempts driven by drug companies to stop the questioning. They are using the same tactics that the tobacco companies used to deflect from the fact that their product caused heart disease of which they were well aware. Those tactics included: distract, redirect and delay, tactics evident in every aspect of the campaign by big Pharma to ensure their profits.

How many of these assurances do you remember? In all of the following cases, assurances were given even after the effects of the particular problem were already known by the company or government agency responsible:

- Lead in the water supply of Flint, Michigan
- Asbestos causing mesothelioma
- Brain damage from lead paint
- Heart attacks from Vioxx
- Birth defects from Thalidomide
- Leaks from silicone breast implants
- Destruction of the ecosystem from DDT

Don't throw our children out of school and our educators out of work until the real issues regarding vaccines are required to be studied.

Please continue to allow exemptions so that our residents can choose a safe schedule of vaccinations based on the health of themselves or their children. Let's send a strong message to the drug companies that they are here to serve us, we are not here to serve them. I urge you to vote "ought not to pass" on this bill and protect the personal freedoms this country stands for.