

## Testimony in Opposition to LD 798

By Laurel Libby of Auburn

Senator Millett, Representative Kornfield, and distinguished members of the Education & Cultural Affairs Committee

My name is Laurel Libby. I live in Auburn. I request you vote to oppose LD 798

I am a nurse, and worked in the ICU for 13 years. My husband (a physical therapist) and I have chosen to vaccinate our children, though on a slightly graduated schedule.

When I started working in the ICU at Maine Medical Center in 2004, there was a relatively new drug called Xigris that we used to treat severe sepsis. The approval of Xigris was based on results from a double-blind, placebo controlled phase 3 trial which included 1,690 subjects from 11 countries. Mortality rates were 24.7% among Xigris-treated subjects versus 30.8% among subjects treated with placebo. Overall, Xigris increased the odds of survival by 38.1%. This was a huge breakthrough in the treatment of sepsis.

Over the next few years I also worked in ICU research. I facilitated further Xigris studies, and the medical world kept treating sepsis patients with Xigris, the rock star of severe sepsis treatment.

Four years ago I was admitted to the hospital with pneumonia and severe sepsis. The doctors overseeing my care didn't even consider treating me with Xigris. That's because in 2011 Eli Lilly voluntarily withdrew Xigris from all markets. This decision was made because the most recent study, PROWESS-SHOCK, showed that the study did not meet the primary endpoint of a statistically significant reduction in 28-day all-cause mortality in patients with septic shock. In fact, not only did Xigris not decrease mortality in sepsis, it increased bleeding risks, including intracranial hemorrhage.

My point in bringing up Xigris is that nothing is lost and much can be gained by continued study of any medical treatment, especially one that is so widely administered as vaccines. It is truly epic arrogance to think that we have come close to learning all we can about the human body. And as my favorite pharmacist at Maine Medical Center was wont to say, "All medicine is poison, but some have favorable side effects."

Second, I have to point out the irony that "my body, my choice" means that you can abort your unborn baby, but this bill is the equivalent of "my body, government's choice."

Thirdly, as I mentioned earlier, we have vaccinated our children. But this fall when my four-year old received his flu shot, he had a huge reaction to it. His thigh swelled to almost twice its normal size, and at its worst I was performing frequent neurological and pulse checks to make sure he still had normal function and blood flow. He recovered fully after a week or so, and I never took him in to see the doctor because I could manage it at home. I did make the mental note not to let him have the vaccine again. Two of my other children have allergies with anaphylactic reactions, so as a nurse, and mother, and person with common sense I know that is the right course of action. His next reaction could be systemic instead of localized. But because I managed his reaction at home instead of taking him in and getting it documented, if this bill passes I won't be able to get a medical exemption. I have tried home schooling in years past, and it is not for us. So if this bill passes Maine will lose a nurse and physical therapist when we move to a state that supports freedom of choice.

And finally, this country was founded on freedom. Making vaccination mandatory is a complete departure from our founding principles. I don't want the government anywhere near my medical decisions. Where does this slippery slope end? Obesity, heart disease, Type II diabetes, and smoking kill millions a year. Should the government start regulating these types of health issues? Our founding fathers believed in the principles of liberty to such an extent that they fought a war to free us from England's overreach. Looking to those principles, I ask you to vote no on LD 798.