



Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 1811-FN

An Act Repealing Statutory Immunization Requirements for Children New Hampshire House Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee

Chair MacDonald and Members of the House Committee on Health, Human Services and Elderly,

My name is Joseph Zamboni, and I submit this written testimony in opposition to HB 1811-FN on behalf of the Pro-Vaccine Legal Alliance (PVLA). PVLA is a project of American Families for Vaccines (AFV), building a national network of legal, public health, and medical experts dedicated to protecting access to safe, effective vaccines and supporting evidence-based immunization policy. Our work focuses on ensuring that laws and policies governing vaccination promote child health, equity, and public trust while remaining grounded in sound science and long-standing public health practice.

In addition, as a former leader at Maine's Department of Health and Human Services, and as a public health professor myself, I submit to you that this bill is very concerning for both the people of New Hampshire and in New England. This proposal does not merely expand exemptions or adjust implementation—it dismantles the state's communicable disease prevention infrastructure for children altogether, eliminating requirements, records, outbreak controls, and public health rulemaking authority. That is a profound policy choice with real, foreseeable consequences that will impact all of New England.

In fact, the bill, as written, makes quarantine and isolation some of the only policy tools left during an outbreak, which have huge impacts on individuals, families, schools, and jobs.¹

HB 1811 asserts that childhood immunization requirements are inherently coercive and incompatible with informed consent. That framing misunderstands both medical ethics

¹ When vaccination is removed or weakened as a public health tool, governments are left with far more restrictive and disruptive measures to control outbreaks. Vaccines are uniquely effective because they prevent disease before exposure, reduce transmission at the population level, and protect vulnerable individuals without limiting freedom of movement or association. In contrast, when vaccination coverage declines and outbreaks occur, public health authorities must rely on blunt interventions such as isolation, quarantine, school exclusion, and movement restrictions to stop transmission. These measures are inherently coercive, confining people to their homes or excluding them from workplaces, schools, and public life, often regardless of whether they are sick. Historically and legally, quarantine and isolation represent some of the most significant intrusions on individual liberty the government can impose. Ironically, eliminating or restricting vaccines makes it more likely that the state will resort to these far more draconian tools, resulting in much greater infringements on personal freedom during a public health emergency.

and public health law. Informed consent governs the relationship between a patient and a clinician. School immunization requirements do not force medical treatment, they establish conditions for participation in shared environments where individual decisions affect others, particularly infants, immunocompromised children (and school staff), and people who cannot be vaccinated for legitimate medical reasons. New Hampshire has long recognized this distinction by allowing medical exemptions, while maintaining baseline requirements to prevent outbreaks. HB 1811 does not improve informed consent, it removes the guardrails that protect children collectively.

Under current law, New Hampshire requires (1) immunization records, (2) reporting by schools and childcare facilities, and (3) temporary exclusion of unvaccinated children during outbreaks. HB 1811 repeals all of these provisions simultaneously. That means the state loses situational awareness during outbreaks. Schools lose the ability to act quickly to protect students. And, New Hampshire public health officials are left reacting after harm has already occurred. This is not a future hypothetical concern. The fiscal note from the Department of Health explicitly warns that multiple outbreaks per year are possible, with investigation and response costs of \$100,000–\$350,000 per outbreak, plus new staffing needs.

While the bill projects reductions in vaccine purchasing expenditures, those savings are offset, and likely overwhelmed, by increased outbreak response costs, additional public health staffing, and the potential loss of up to \$4 million annually in federal funding if New Hampshire cannot meet disease surveillance and reporting requirements. **In other words, HB 1811 trades predictable prevention costs for unpredictable emergency spending, higher system strain, increased healthcare costs, and introducing a greater risk to children.**

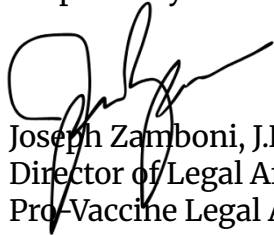
This bill abandons a century of settled public health law. Courts across the country, including in cases involving New England states, have consistently upheld school immunization requirements as a legitimate exercise of state authority to protect public health. HB 1811 does not respond to new constitutional doctrine or scientific evidence, it instead represents a policy rejection of public health itself. No alternative system is offered. No replacement safeguards are proposed. The bill simply declares that the state shall not require vaccination under any circumstance.

Children bear the risk here (along with many elderly). Children do not choose school policy. They rely on adults, policy-makers, and the state to create environments that minimize preventable harm. Removing immunization requirements does not enhance children's freedom, it exposes them to risks they cannot control, particularly those with medical vulnerabilities.

HB 1811 is not a modest reform. It is a full repeal of New Hampshire's childhood communicable disease protections, justified by rhetoric that misrepresents both informed consent and public health practice. I respectfully urge the Committee to vote against this bill and to reaffirm New Hampshire's longstanding commitment to protecting children, schools, and communities through evidence-based public health policy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

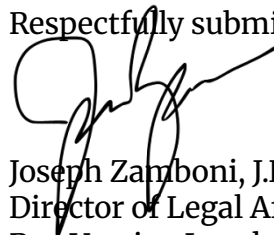
Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Zamboni', written over a circular stamp.

Joseph Zamboni, J.D., M.P.H.
Director of Legal Affairs
Pro-Vaccine Legal Alliance (PVLA)

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Zamboni', written over a circular stamp.

Joseph Zamboni, J.D., M.P.H.
Director of Legal Affairs
Pro-Vaccine Legal Alliance (PVLA)