

February 9, 2022

The Honorable, Chair Jeb Bradley
Senate Health and Human Services
Legislative Office Building Room 101
Concord, NH 03301

Re: New Futures' testimony in opposition to SB 374, relative to SARS-CoV-2 vaccinations.

Dear Chair Bradley and Members of the Committee:

New Futures appreciates the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 374, relative to SARS-CoV-2 vaccinations. New Futures is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that advocates, educates, and collaborates to improve the health and wellness of all New Hampshire residents. In this role, we work extensively with policy makers, health care providers and communities to improve overall public health and health equity across the Granite State. New Futures supports public health policy measures that decrease illness and disease, including vaccines and programs that ensure equitable and broad distribution of vaccines, and other evidence-based disease reducing treatments and prophylactic courses of action.

Vaccinations protect individuals and the community from the risk of severe illness and have essentially eradicated deadly diseases. They also protect those who can't get vaccinated, including infants, or people with weakened immune systems. The COVID-19 vaccine has played a significant role in changing the course of this pandemic. Time and time again, public health experts have said that widespread vaccination, including booster shots, is the best way to lessen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and ultimately build herd immunity. Based on that public health science and advice from medical experts, some employers, postsecondary institutions, and other entities have made decisions to mandate vaccines for the health and safety of their employees and students they serve. The freedom to make these decisions should be left up to those entities.

SB 374, prohibits a person from requiring that an individual who had COVID-19 receive a vaccination against the virus as a condition for employment, education, or access to businesses or entities open to the public. According to the CDC, the COVID-19 vaccination causes a more predictable immune response than infection with the virus. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine gives most people a high level of protection against COVID-19 and can provide added protection for people who already had COVID-19. One study showed that for people who already had COVID-19, those who do not get vaccinated after their recovery are more than 2 times as likely to get COVID-19 again than those who get fully vaccinated after their recovery.¹

This bill also establishes an exemption as a matter of conscience against a vaccination mandate and establishes a criminal penalty and a private right of action for enforcement. If passed, this amendment would tie the hands of employers and limit their ability to enforce public health policies. Medical exemptions are a necessary component to vaccine policies. However, an objection based on conscientious or philosophical reasons- essentially allowing an easy opt out to anyone- would

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>

reverse the progress New Hampshire has made in defeating this pandemic and other previously eradicated diseases.

According to the Infectious Disease Society of America, studies demonstrate that the easier it is to receive an exemption, the higher the rate of exemptions in a particular state. As the number of exemptions increases, the risk of vaccine-preventable disease also increases. Therefore, states should make every effort to minimize the number of its citizens exempted from immunization mandates. Exemptions increase health costs by the need to investigate and control avoidable outbreaks; costs that are paid by state and federal taxpayers—the overwhelming majority of whom have chosen to be vaccinated.²

State government should not prevent an employer, educational or businesses entity from making choices based on public health and safety concerns, especially during a public health pandemic. New Futures urges the committee members to vote Inexpedient to Legislate on SB 374.

Sincerely,



Kathryn (Kate) Frey
Vice President of Advocacy

² https://www.idsociety.org/globalassets/idsa/policy--advocacy/current_topics_and_issues/immunizations_and_vaccines/statements/062312-idsa-policy-statement-on-state-immunization-mandates.pdf