

To: Senate Health and Human Services Committee

From: Robert T Griffith Jr MD

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Fellow American Academy of Pediatrics

Date 2/26/2026

Testimony in SUPPORT of S 2379

Good afternoon,

I am a pediatrician who has practiced primary care pediatrics in Rhode Island for more than 40 years. I write as a representative of the RI Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics in support of Senate Bill 2379 which requires health insurers to provide without cost-sharing all vaccinations recommended by the Rhode Island department of health (RIDOH).

Routine adult and childhood vaccines are remarkably safe, carefully developed with scientifically rigorous oversight and have saved trillions of dollars in both direct and indirect health care costs. Vaccines have saved MILLIONS of children from death or chronic disability. I have cared for patients who have died or become significantly disabled after contracting a vaccine preventable illness. Unfortunately, our current federal administration has raised unfounded concerns about the safety and necessity of some important vaccines.

Passage of this bill will help assure the health and safety of our child and adult population. In 1998 Rhode Island experienced an outbreak of an invasive meningococcal disease. This is a frightening and devastating illness. I personally saw a toddler one afternoon in my office with a fever. The child looks remarkably well and had normal blood tests. He was sent home and was dead at midnight for invasive meningococcal disease. At that time meningococcal vaccine was not routinely administered. As news of multiple deaths from this infection spread in the community, there were long lines at doctor's offices and pharmacies. Our phone lines were non-stop with questions about the disease and how to get vaccine. There were break-ins and robberies at pharmacies and clinics attempting to secure doses of the meningococcal vaccine. Assuring that all eligible Rhode Islanders have access to vaccines will save money and lives

Thank you for taking the time to review this testimony and I look forward to your anticipated support of S2379

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