



## **The Senate of the State of New Hampshire**

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107 North Main Street, Concord, N.H. 03301-4951

The Hon. Governor Christopher T. Sununu

The State House

107 N Main Street

Concord, NH 03301

Governor,

I am writing to you today on behalf of several of my constituents, requesting that you reconsider the groups included in Phase 1B of the State's vaccine distribution. I respectfully request that you include teachers, grocery store employees, and those with Type I diabetes in Phase 1B.

In the current timeline, our teachers are not included in the early Phase 1B. As a State, we agree that children learn best in classrooms. We have heard the repeated call to return to in-person learning. It would make sense then that teachers, even those younger than 65, be prioritized in order to make our classrooms as safe as possible. So many children are missing the opportunity to be in schools, the socialization and learning that that allows, and the routine and structure that accompanies it. Parents of school-age children have had such a difficult year; trying to work while having children in the house is difficult at best, and so many parents have accomplished this throughout almost a full year of work and school already. They deserve our protection and advocacy, and I ask for your reconsideration for teachers on this basis.

In addition, I ask that you include grocery store employees in Phase 1B. Christopher Penta of Portsmouth is a regional manager for McKinnon's Markets in both New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Throughout the pandemic, Mr. Penta and his team have worked hard to ensure that the shelves stay stocked and our cupboards stay full. There is not an option for these essential workers to work from home. They have been on the front lines of this pandemic, interacting with the public each and every day. Mr. Penta has brought it to my attention that frontline retail workers – like Mr. Penta and his team – are not considered a vaccination priority in the planning documents released by the State. In our neighboring states of Massachusetts and Maine these essential workers are prioritized in their vaccine distribution plans. Protecting our essential frontline workers is critical to ensuring that our food supply chain remains intact. We can only imagine the horrors if a grocer had to close their doors due to an outbreak, even for a few days, stranding a community without access to food.

I would also request that people with Type 1 diabetes be considered a priority in the State's vaccination plan. Type 2 diabetics are already included in the group. It makes sense to add the 5% to

10% of diabetics who have Type 1 diabetes to the 1B group. Several other states include these types of individuals in their early vaccination schedules and I hope that New Hampshire will as well.

I'm hoping that you may have some way to address this situation, which is affecting many critical workers and those with certain medical conditions in our state. Please consider modifying the COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan so that frontline essential retail workers, like Mr. Penta and his team, as well as teachers and those with Type 1 diabetes, can receive the vaccine sooner. Doing so would recognize the critical work that these citizens are providing as well as support the general health of our citizens during this pandemic.

I look forward to hearing from you and working on this issue.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Perkins Kwoka (CML)

Senator Rebecca Perkins Kwoka

Senate District 21