



STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
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AUGUSTA, MAINE  
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Paul R. LePage  
GOVERNOR

28 June 2013

Sen. Justin Alford, Senate President  
State House  
Augusta, ME

Rep. Mark Eves, Speaker of the House  
State House  
Augusta, ME

Sen. Michael Thibodeau, Minority Leader  
State House  
Augusta, ME

Rep. Kenneth Fredette, Minority Leader  
State House  
Augusta, ME

Dear Legislative Leadership:

In light of the strong legislative support, I have decided to let LD 171, "An Act To Facilitate the Licensing of International Mail Order Prescription Pharmacies by the Maine Board of Pharmacy," go into law without my signature. However, I continue to have strong reservations about the policy reflected in this bill and have committed to work with Senator Thomas and others to improve it over the summer. I certainly hope we will have your support in these efforts.

When it comes to prescription drugs, I have two goals: making sure they are safe and affordable. This legislation helps with the latter by removing certain international mail order prescription drugs from regulation under the Maine Pharmacy Act. It lets organizations like Hardwood Products reduce their costs for prescription benefit programs. That is a positive step and presents one option, although many others exist to make drugs more affordable.

My concern is with the safety aspect of these drugs. The reality is Maine does not have the ability to regulate these drugs, or even confirm the location where these drugs were made, how they are dosed, or how they have been stored. While it only allows pharmacies in other advanced countries to fill these prescriptions, we cannot trace the original drug back to its manufacturer. Furthermore, if something terrible happens and a Mainer gets sick or dies because the drugs were bad, then the family of that Mainer will have a difficult time finding justice in our courts.

These mail order drugs could also make our prescription drug abuse problem worse. We have worked hard to build the Prescription Monitoring Program so our physicians and pharmacists can identify, prevent, and remedy opiate abuse. This law, while it cannot make importation of opiates legal, may be misunderstood as doing so. In order to combat addiction and crime, we must ensure that prescription opiates are dispensed only through licensed Maine entities, such as pharmacies and hospitals.



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There are other, smaller issues which give me concern and which we must work on over the summer. This bill will become law, but we must do more. We will get to work over the summer to come up with legislation ensuring that Maine people are protected and can have some security when they buy these drugs. Until then, the Maine people should be made aware of the risks and they can then make their own decision.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

  
Paul R. LePage  
Governor

cc: Sen. Doug Thomas  
Michael Cianchette, Chief Legal Counsel  
Holly Lusk, Senior Health Policy Advisor  
Anne Head, Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation  
Joseph Bruno, Chair, Maine Board of Pharmacy