

Stephen Scaer
Nashua
LD 394

Dear members of the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee

Please oppose Chapter 117 (LD 394) which would expand the powers of school counselors and social workers to keep essential information from parents.

Most people assume that when counselors and physicians treat childhood gender dysphoria they apply rigorous, evidence-based, and individualized approaches, and that they work with children and their parents for years to address other mental health issues before putting them on a path of irreversible treatments. Public school policy shows how wrong they are.

A 14-year-old girl with autism spectrum disorder, anxiety, and a history of trauma can identify as a boy. The school district will facilitate her social transition and hide it from her parents, and then when she's 18 - still too young to buy cigarettes or alcohol - she can get testosterone on first visit to Planned Parenthood. All of this without considering how her neurodiversity and mental health disorders are impacting her perceptions and decisions. If her parents are included in discussions about a child's transition, counselors and therapist might quote astronomical suicide figures from The Trevor Project to coerce them to go along with social and medical transitions. In fact, suicide rates among trans-identifying youth are extremely rare. A review of data from the UK's largest gender clinic, Tavistock, indicated a suicide rate of less than a tenth of a percent.

Maine already practices the outmoded Gender Affirming Care model for treating gender dysphoria, which has been abandoned by England, Norway, Finland, and Sweden. This model allows children to diagnose themselves and decide a course of treatments. Any coexisting mental health disorders, such as depression, are attributed to the "minority stress" of gender dysphoria.

As the numbers of detransitioners rise and the medical scandals become more glaring, Maine will eventually ban or limit the medical transition of children. In the meantime, it's incumbent upon parents to protect their children from an ideology and a school system that teaches kids that they were born in the wrong bodies and may need chemicals and surgeries to be their authentic selves. Parents of children who are especially vulnerable, such as girls with autism, need your support.

Sincerely,
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