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LD 1735 An Act to Safeguard Gender Affirming Health Care

I would like to begin by thanking the chairs Senator Carney and Representative Moonen along with the rest of the Judiciary Committee for hearing my testimony today. I would also like to thank Representative Osher for sponsoring this bill and the cosponsors for cosponsoring. My name is Aspen Ruhlin, and I am speaking to you today as a representative of Mabel Wadsworth Center in Bangor. Our center provides a range of sexual and reproductive healthcare services, the most relevant of which in this hearing is gender-affirming hormone therapy and general trans-competent healthcare services. Today, we are urging you to vote in support of LD 1735 An Act to Safeguard Gender Affirming Health Care.

Across the country, we are seeing unprecedented attacks against transgender people and gender-affirming care for both youth and adults. We know that this care is safe, and that it is life-saving¹. We know that gender-affirming care has one of the lowest regret rates of any form of healthcare, with only 0.3% of patients regretting gender-affirming surgeries, compared to the 6-30% regret rate for knee replacement surgery². Yet, no one is calling for restrictions or bans on knee replacement procedures. It is transparently obvious that these attacks on gender-affirming care are not based in medical science or a concern for wellbeing, but in transphobic violence.

Maine has the opportunity to not only break from these transphobic trends we are seeing across the country, but also to safeguard access to this essential medical care. While we are not likely to be the top priority destination for those who have to travel out of state to access gender-affirming care, between both

¹ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35212746/>

²

<https://www.gendergp.com/new-study-confirms-regret-rates-of-gender-affirming-surgery-are-non-existent/>



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geographical distance and rurality, we need to make sure that those who do come here can do so safely. We need to make sure that our healthcare providers have the ability to provide the care they are trained to provide without the threat of legal trouble from another state. Why should Maine healthcare providers be held to unjust laws in Texas, Tennessee, or any other states that have attacked access to healthcare for transgender people? Our healthcare providers should be able to provide competent, legal healthcare services in Maine without fear of meddling from other states' governments.

Maine has the opportunity to not just create common-sense protections for our providers, but to also take bold action in support of transgender people. We urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1735.

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