

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. I am here to advocate for LD 1735 to be further workshopped and moved to the next legislative session. While there are parts of it that need work, I strongly believe in the importance of gender-affirming care.

My name is Sam and I grew up in Maine and I am proud to call this place my home. I am transgender and I use she/her pronouns.

To me, what makes Maine so beautiful is the strong sense of the transgender community. Having experiences of gender-based oppression, safety and a sense of togetherness is crucial.

Last month, I organized a transgender and non-binary celebration. Over 70 people came to celebrate trans joy, many of them identifying as part of the community. This was just for people in Orono.

Attending UMaine, many of my out-of-state transgender friends rely on gender-affirming care in Maine. As a transgender woman, I understand the need for this care. Growing up in the wrong gender, I became suicidal. Feeling safe and confident in my womanhood has saved my life. Similarly, for my trans-out-of-state friends, the care they receive here is life-saving.

While recognizing applicable parental concerns, it is crucial to see how gender-affirming care saves lives. That is why this bill needs further revising. We must place importance on my community's need for affirming health care.

Thank you for your strong consideration in moving LD 1735 to the next legislative session for further workshopping.