



Maine Equal Justice
People Policy Solutions

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MEJ Testimony in Support of LD 1735, An Act to Safeguard Gender-affirming Health Care

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Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Kathy Kilrain del Rio, I use she/her pronouns, and I'm the Advocacy and Programs Director for Maine Equal Justice, a nonprofit legal aid provider working to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity for people in Maine. Today we are testifying in support of LD 1735.

Ensuring that Maine can be a safe place for transgender youth, their families, and their medical providers is a goal we should all be proud to support. Further, freedom of travel between the states has long been protected in the U.S. Constitution.¹ For these reasons, we are glad to be able to support LD 1735. Maine should and must be able to determine what safeguards should be enacted in this state in the face of increasing attacks on the safety, health, and existence of transgender people across parts of our country. We must act to protect medical providers in our state who provide legal and necessary care to transgender youth. And most of all we must act to protect transgender youth who access gender affirming care – care which is lifesaving and necessary to the physical and mental wellbeing of transgender youth.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has made clear the importance of gender affirming care for youth: "Proper gender-affirming care can mitigate a patient's clinical distress and lead to significant improvements in the overall well-being of youth and adolescents who are at risk of or have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria ... studies show that transgender adults who received appropriate treatment during adolescence had a lower incidence of lifetime suicidal ideation than those who wanted but could not obtain such treatment."²

We understand that there will likely be further work done on this legislation to make sure it is the best legislation for Maine. We strongly support the goals of LD 1735 and urge you to support it. This legislation provides an opportunity for Maine to live up to our state motto, "Dirigo". By supporting LD 1735, we can ensure that Maine truly leads when it comes to protecting the needs of transgender youth. Thank you.

¹ <https://texaslawreview.org/travel-rights-in-a-culture-war/>

² <https://www.aclu.org/news/lgbtq-rights/five-things-to-know-about-gender-affirming-health-care>