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*25+ Years of **Independent Practice** as Healthcare Providers for the People of Maine*

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Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

I am a primary care nurse practitioner working in Piscataquis County, a member of the Maine Nurse Practitioner Association (MNPA) and serving on the MNPA Legislative Committee. I am writing in support of **LD 1735, An Act to Safeguard Gender-affirming Health Care**. Our association stands with other professional and medical organizations in support of this bill.

Gender-affirming health care provides medical and mental health services to transgender adolescents and adults who are already vulnerable and marginalized in many areas in and outside Maine. It is becoming increasingly more difficult for this population to receive high-quality care considering legislation in other states banning treatments and criminalizing the health care providers serving in this field of care.

Gender-affirming care is health care and these decisions ought not be made by lawmakers but between the patient and provider where clinical decision-making and evidence-based practice occur.

Gender-affirming and reproductive care providers should not fear repercussions from out-of-state law enforcement or a parent who disagrees with the plan of care for transitioning adolescents.

LD 1735 will place protective legislation on health care providers' personal information, which, if breached, might adversely affect their practice and empaneled patients.

I strongly urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1735.

Respectfully submitted,

Dorothy O'Keefe, MSN, AGNP-C

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