

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and members of the Maine Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services,

My name is Katie Wieninger of Cherryfield, Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am writing to urge you to vote against LD 227, An Act Regarding Health Care in the State, on the grounds that it protects kidnapers and child-traffickers, sets a precedent for those who are against abortion and gender altering surgeries to be punished for their beliefs, and strips parents both in and out of Maine of their parental rights.

First, LD 227 will allow anyone including children to seek out gender altering surgeries and treatments that will mutilate and genetically alter them. It will also protect anyone who helps them and penalize anyone who refuses. The state recognizes that children are not capable of making permanent life-altering decisions in areas such as marriage, getting a tattoo, buying cigarettes, signing a contract, etc. The state also declares that children are legally unable to consent to sexual acts. By the same standards, the state should recognize that children should not be allowed to choose to alter their bodies physically and genetically by so called "gender affirming" practices. In reality, anybody who sexually alters a child, with or without their consent, should be guilty of a crime just as surely as anyone who violates the Age of Consent law is. They should be prosecuted, not protected by a bill such as LD 227.

Secondly, LD 227 will offer protection to anybody who claims that they are helping a child get gender affirming health care. This would make Maine a safe-haven for every child predator and trafficker who uses that pass phrase, and the law would have no legal grounds to rescue children from those abusers, even if they came from a state with laws that prohibited the gender altering procedures of minors. At the same time, it will attempt to bully those opposed to abortion and gender-affirming surgeries into providing them even if they are against their religious beliefs by threatening legal repercussions. This is not the freedom our founding fathers fought for.

Thirdly, parents have a God-given right and responsibility to raise and to protect their children from those who would harm them. Passing LD 227 will strip parents of that right and give the government an unconstitutional amount of power. The effects of this will be nation-wide as LD 227 will prohibit Maine from enforcing anti-abortion and anti-gender altering judgments from other states.

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and members of the Maine Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, on behalf of voters who oppose this bill, I beg you to protect our children, both born and unborn, from the ill-effects of LD 227, only a few of which I have summarized in this testimony. Thank you for your time.