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Good morning Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Alyssa Goodwin, M.D., and I am a resident of Brunswick. I am here today to testify **in opposition** to LD 380: An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Gender-affirming Health Care Services. I submit this testimony as a **pediatrician in Maine for over 20 years**, a **school physician**, an **expert in youth suicide prevention**, and as the **Chair of the School Health Committee** of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I speak on behalf of the many patients I have cared for over the past two decades—**all of whom deserve the same opportunities, dignity, and respect as every child in Maine**.

All children are created equal, and **every child deserves the care, respect, and support they need to thrive and lead fulfilling lives**. Bills that single out transgender youth for differential treatment do not protect children—they harm them. These proposals would have devastating consequences for some of Maine's most vulnerable young people.

Transgender and gender-diverse youth already face **alarmingly high rates of bullying, depression, self-harm, and suicide**. According to the **2023 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS)**:

- **51.6% of transgender high school students** in Maine reported seriously considering suicide in the past year, compared with **15.5% of their cisgender peers**.
- **28.4% of transgender students** reported attempting suicide at least once in the past year, compared with **6.6% of cisgender students**.

Let me be clear: it is not being transgender that leads to these outcomes—it is the **stigma, rejection, and abuse** that puts these youth at risk.

Gender-affirming care can be life-saving. It is an **evidence-based, medically accepted treatment** supported by every major medical organization in the United States, including the:

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Medical Association
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- American College of Physicians

This care helps young people live as their authentic selves and significantly **reduces rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidality**.

Despite common misconceptions, **gender-affirming surgeries are very rarely performed on minors**. The care provided to transgender youth typically includes **social support, mental health services, and, in some cases, reversible interventions**, all delivered in close consultation with families and physicians.

Denying this care is not neutral—it is harmful. It can constitute **medical neglect and emotional abuse**, and it strips families of the right to make private, medically informed decisions in partnership with their doctors.

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In addition, repealing laws like Maine's **Shield Law**—which protects providers from out-of-state prosecution for delivering legal, standard-of-care treatment—would not only harm patients but **threaten our already strained healthcare infrastructure**. Maine doctors should not face legal retaliation from other states for providing care that is both legal and medically necessary here.

These decisions belong in the exam room—not the state house. **Lawmakers do not have the medical expertise or moral authority to override the judgment of physicians, patients, and families.**

I urge you to vote **NO** on these bills and to stand on the side of **science, compassion, and the rights of all Maine children to be safe and supported.**

Thank you for your time and your continued commitment to the health and safety of Maine's children.

Alyssa Goodwin, M.D.

https://www.maine.gov/miyhs/sites/default/files/2023_Reports/Detailed_Reports/HS/MIYHS2023_Detailed_Reports_HS_State/Maine%20High%20School%20Detailed%20Tables.pdf

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<https://glaad.org/medical-association-statements-supporting-trans-youth-healthcare-and-against-discriminatory/#:~:text=On%20June%2012%2C%202023%2C%20The,support%20of%20evidence%2Dbased%20care.>

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