

Alison Willette
Houlton
LD 380

As a correctional nurse I have had the honor of working with individuals as they navigate their rock bottom moments in life. It has always been a source of pride when I am able to earn that person's trust and they share some of their struggles.

1 theme that has played out repeatedly in that setting is inconsistent access to health care. Whether it is medical or mental health needs, not having them meet consistently has a direct effect on

1. returning to substance use
2. declining mental health- many times leading to hospitalization, self harm behaviors and possibly suicide.
3. Domestic violence
4. Unwanted pregnancies
5. Increased involvement with law enforcement and incarceration

The list could go on, but you see my point. None of these things is a positive outcome for our communities or our state.

Science has proven that the human genome can create more than 2 genders. How can you, as legislatures, consider telling your constituents that 1 person is more important/ better than another? That 1 person's belief system is more acceptable than another's? That 1 person's medical and mental stability is more important than another's?

That is what I see when considering these types of bills.

Medical decisions belong in the medical office, between the patient and their doctor.

Intentionally blocking access to Healthcare options at a legislative level is intentionally putting individuals at risk of all of the things I listed above. It is intentionally putting communities at risk for the effects of the items on that list.

Additionally, paying this bill would set a standard going forward that any treatment that is not 100% socially accepted is subject to litigation. Imagine if that sort of thing had happened during the development of vaccines or birth control (another hormone treatment) or hormone replacement therapy for menopausal women or testosterone treatment for men...it could go on. Why are those hormone treatments acceptable, but these are being presented to you? Simply because this is the current medical thing that isn't 100% socially acceptable. Why isn't it? Because it's relatively new and people don't fully understand its uses.

That is science. That is medicine. That is real life.

In order for society to advance, we must be willing to look past the momentary discomfort and see the longterm potential.