

Abigail Perry
Starks
LD 380

My name is Abigail Perry, and I am a concerned citizen and a family member of a transgender individual. I am writing to express my strong opposition to LD 380, "An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Gender-affirming Health Care Services."

While the bill aims to amend laws related to gender-affirming care, I believe it undermines the essential health and well-being of transgender and gender-diverse individuals by restricting access to necessary, medically recommended care. My concerns about LD 380 are as follows:

1. Limiting Access to Critical Health Care

Gender-affirming health care is a vital and well-established component of medical treatment for transgender and gender-diverse individuals. This bill could make it more difficult for individuals to access the care they need by introducing unnecessary barriers. Medical professionals should have the right to recommend and provide appropriate care based on the best interests of their patients, not political agendas.

2. Compromising Patient Autonomy

The proposed changes undermine the autonomy of patients and providers by introducing limitations on the ability to advocate for gender-affirming care. Gender-affirming care is not a "one-size-fits-all" treatment, and medical professionals must be able to assess each individual's needs and circumstances. Denying them the ability to make recommendations based on these needs could lead to worse health outcomes for already vulnerable populations.

3. Potential Harm to Transgender and Gender-diverse Youth

Transgender and gender-diverse youth are at heightened risk of mental health challenges, including depression and anxiety, particularly when they are unable to access affirming care. This bill would exacerbate these challenges by limiting access to the medical services that are proven to improve mental health outcomes for these individuals. The potential harm to children and adolescents is unacceptable, and we should be working to create a supportive environment for all Maine youth, not one that discourages access to affirming care.

4. Reinforcing Stigmatization and Discrimination

This bill would further stigmatize transgender individuals and their families by making it harder for them to receive the care and support they deserve. Transgender individuals already face discrimination and marginalization in many aspects of life, including health care. This bill could contribute to a broader climate of intolerance, making it even more difficult for transgender people to live openly and authentically.

5. Disregard for Established Medical Guidelines

Gender-affirming care is supported by leading medical organizations, including the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Psychiatric Association. These organizations affirm that such care is essential for the health and well-being of transgender individuals. By limiting this care, LD 380 disregards the best medical practices and expert recommendations for treating transgender patients.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote "Ought Not to Pass" on LD 380. Instead, I encourage you to work toward policies that promote inclusive and evidence-based health care for all individuals, regardless of gender identity. Gender-affirming health care is not only necessary—it is life-saving. The state of Maine should support, not hinder, the health and well-being of its transgender residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.