

Jess Huddy  
Waterville  
LD 380

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

Thank you for hearing my voice on these issues today. My name is Jess Huddy — I'm a resident of Waterville, and am writing in strong opposition to LD 1337.

It is no secret that trans folks have risen to the forefront as the most recent targets of our polarized political atmosphere in the last several years, and much of this divisiveness has focused on teens' access to gender-affirming healthcare. There is no professional medical organization involved in the care of transgender youth that opposes this care, which does not involve genital surgery in minors and where no medical interventions are provided before the age of puberty.

On the surface, LD 380 is about "parental rights." However, reading between the lines, it's truly about controlling teens by creating barriers to accessing life-saving healthcare. When I say "life-saving," this is not a hyperbole. Research from a leading LGBTQ+ nonprofit, The Trevor Project, found in their National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health that 45% of LGBTQ youth, including more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth, seriously considered attempting suicide in 2022 (<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022>).

The American Medical Association (AMA) also released a statement to state governors across the US in 2021, citing evidence that "trans and non-binary gender identities are normal variations of human identity and expression, and that forgoing gender-affirming care can have tragic health consequences, both mental and physical." In this statement, the AMA also specifically says: "We believe it is inappropriate and harmful for any state to legislatively dictate that certain transition-related services are never appropriate and limit the range of options physicians and families may consider when making decisions for pediatric patients. ... Transgender children, like all children, have the best chance to thrive when they are supported and can obtain the health care they need. Studies suggest that improved body satisfaction and self-esteem following the receipt of gender-affirming care is protective against poorer mental health and supports healthy relationships with parents and peers."

(<https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/ama-press-releases/ama-states-stop-interferin-g-health-care-transgender-children>).

The current Maine state law allows doctors and patients to safely give and receive the care they need, and LD 380 would delay or prohibit this care solely based on the patient's age and whether their parent(s) agree with their child receiving gender-affirming care, without considering that teens are people who know themselves and understand their own needs. This bill leaves the door open for parents to effectively stand between patients and doctors for no reason other than the patient happens to be a teenager.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on LD 380. Thank you for your time.