

Aoife Dowd
Portland, Maine
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee.
Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Aoife Dowd and I'm a resident of Portland.

I am writing in opposition to LD380. I'm a queer woman and the partner of a trans man and I care deeply about the trans community and trans futures.

I have a public health degree and one of the first things we covered in my first day of Intro to Public Health is how dangerous driving is. In the US today driving and road related incidents are one of the leading causes of death and harm with close to 120 people dying a day in an accident. Yet in Maine we still allow 16-18 year olds to drive every day by themselves. We trust that the education, care and hours they've spent learning have prepared them to safely operate a vehicle and they have the autonomy, maturity and freedom to do so. This bill purports that, gender affirming healthcare, which we know actively saves lives, reduces harm and is done under the watchful eye of trained healthcare professionals is more dangerous to 16-18 year olds, that they need their parents' protection. Why can we trust young people to drive a large metal machine alone, but not to make informed decisions around their own care and who they are?

Repealing Maine's Shield Law would additionally subject Maine's already-strained healthcare infrastructure to out-of-state criminal prosecutions for providing standard-of-care health care as legally allowed in this state. Maine state law has allowed doctors and patients to safely give and receive the care they need, and LD 380 would especially cause great harm to health care providers.

As queer people we know so many in our community that have fractured and complicated relationships with their families. For many merely existing as themselves is grounds for their parents to throw them out or disown them. Creating a barrier between young people and the care they desperately need to be their authentic selves is not just cruel, it's dangerous. As many have cited today, trans youth are at a much higher risk of self-harm and suicide attempts- we know one of the proven ways to keep these trans kids safe is by ensuring their access to gender-affirming life saving health care. Forcing students to be outed to their parents and guardians in order to receive care puts already vulnerable kids in unsafe homes at higher risks.

In light of all of these reasons I urge the committee to vote "ought not to pass" on LD380. Thank you.