

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Rebecca Hinchliffe. I am speaking in opposition to LD 394.

As a mother, my kids are my kids. This bill seeks to undermine my role as a mother. It gives schools and counselors power to decide what is best for my children, regardless of what I believe. Even worse, it allows critical information about my own children to be hidden from me. This legislation divides Maine families by separating children from their parents. It seeks to usurp the parental role and hand it over to individuals who stand to profit from their own professional counsel - which is a blatant conflict of interest.

Prescribing puberty blockers, chest binders, or hormones to children is a serious matter. A study In the Journal of the American Academy Of Child and Adolescent Psychology (Vol. 52, No.6 June 2013) confirmed that gender dysphoria does not persist past puberty in most children. Up to 80% of minors reverted back to their biological genders when given more time to sort things out. What will happen to that 80% if they are medicated behind their parents backs? The onset of puberty is an important time in a child's development. Many of us may recall that time in our own lives as being awkward or confusing. By enabling counselors to legally medicate and treat children without parental involvement, you will be responsible for permanently altering the physiological and psychological state of these children.

The American College of Pediatricians states, "There is not a SINGLE long-term study to demonstrate the safety or efficacy of puberty blockers, sex hormones or surgeries for transgender-believing youth." (<https://acpeds.org>) Why then would you vote to approve legislation that would effectively turn our children into Science Experiments? Additionally, studies confirm that puberty blockers can cause depression, suicidal thoughts, osteoporosis, seizures, cognitive impairment, and sterility. If a boy later decides against transition, he will end up with a permanently stunted penis and compromised sexual function. Sex hormones also put youth at a greater risk of heart attacks, stroke, diabetes, blood clots and cancer.

Medical organizations around the world have characterized these interventions in children as experimental and dangerous. World renowned psychiatrist Dr. Christopher Gillberg has said that pediatric transition is "possibly one of the greatest scandals in medical history" and called for "an immediate moratorium on the use of puberty blocker drugs because of their unknown long-term effects."

Mutilating and sterilizing youth is a serious crime. Children cannot make properly informed decisions considering the severity of medical and psychological risks. You have an opportunity and a responsibility to defend and protect our children and to ensure their future success. Please vote to preserve Maine families by voting against LD 394. Thank you.