



Testimony of Katie Lutts, Program Director, OUT Maine  
In support of LD 535, An Act to Increase Access to Necessary Medical Care for Certain Minors  
Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

May 12, 2023

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and distinguished members of the Committee on Judiciary, my name is Katie Lutts, and my pronouns are she/her. I am the Program Director at OUT Maine, an LGBTQ+ youth-serving organization working to create inclusive and affirming communities in Maine. I am speaking today to express our support for LD 535 An Act to Increase Access to Necessary Medical Care for Certain Minors.

For LGBTQ youth, health equity is currently only a dream. As demonstrated by the 2021 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey data, the discriminatory and negative environments they face daily in their homes, schools, and communities are causing serious mental health challenges and risky behaviors that result in long-term negative health outcomes.

The largest number of inquiries from health and behavioral health systems for assistance from OUT Maine are targeted to providing care for transgender youth. The special needs of this subset of the LGBTQ youth population seem to spur recognition in the provider agencies of the dire need for more training for staff and improved office processes.

Transgender youth face the most discrimination, even within health/behavioral health systems, providing a worst-case scenario to drive improvements. Changes made to address the needs of transgender youth will benefit lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth as well, resulting in a win/win for all.

OUT Maine is working hard to increase equitable access to gender-affirming care through professional development and resource development to address the changes necessary for these youth to obtain needed care.

The ideal approach to health care includes family acceptance and support, for all youth. The goal of healthcare providers is to work with youth and families to provide care that is best for the youth. The unfortunate reality is that some families do not understand transgender health care or ignore medical advice.

Due to this lack of family support, transgender 16 and 17-year-olds should be able to access essential medical care as other 16 and 17-year-old Mainers can. The State of Maine already recognizes a variety of situations where these teenage youth are able to make their own medical decisions.

LD 535 creates pathways for 16 and 17-year-old transgender Mainers who have been wrongly blocked from getting the essential gender-affirming healthcare they need to thrive.

We urge you to support the health of this underserved population and vote Ought to Pass on LD 535. Thank you.

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