



Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

**LD 535: An Act to Increase Access to Necessary Medical Care for Certain Minors**

May 12, 2023

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee my name is Gia Drew, and I am the Executive Director of EqualityMaine, which has been advocating on behalf of Maine's LGBTQ+ community since 1984 I am testifying today on behalf of EqualityMaine in support of LD 535, An Act to Increase Access to Necessary Medical Care for Certain Minors

Maine is a leader in the nation with regard to laws and policies that positively shape and protect LGBTQ+ people's lives Inclusive healthcare and criminal justice laws, state nondiscrimination laws, the ability for transgender people to correct their name and gender marker on identity documents, and inclusive parental recognition policies, all benefit LGBTQ+ Mainers Our state has nondiscrimination and anti-bullying laws and policies, a conversion therapy ban covering LGBTQ+ students, and protections for LGBTQ+ youth in the child welfare system <sup>1</sup> We also have afforded older minors greater opportunity to make their own informed treatment decisions for certain forms of health care, including reproductive, mental health, and emergency services, and drug and alcohol counseling Maine understands that requiring parental consent can sometimes pose an insurmountable obstacle in accessing needed healthcare, and so has created comprehensive and considered pathways for mature and informed youth to obtain medically-necessary treatment LD 535 would apply this same reasoning to gender-affirming care

Research unequivocally demonstrates that gender-affirming care improves the mental health and overall well-being of gender diverse children and adolescents <sup>2</sup>

Gender-affirming care encompasses many types of healthcare needs and supports, and

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<sup>1</sup> "Movement Advancement Project State Profiles" *Movement Advancement Project | State Profiles*, [www.lgbtmap.org/equality\\_maps/profile\\_state/ME](http://www.lgbtmap.org/equality_maps/profile_state/ME)

<sup>2</sup> Green, Amy E et al "Association of Gender-Affirming Hormone Therapy With Depression, Thoughts of Suicide, and Attempted Suicide Among Transgender and Nonbinary Youth" *The Journal of adolescent health* official publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine vol 70,4 (2022) 643-649

social and medical gender-affirming healthcare practices have been demonstrated to yield lower rates of adverse mental health outcomes, build self-esteem, and improve overall quality of life for transgender and gender diverse youth. Quite simply, the treatment focuses on aligning outward, physical traits with a person's gender identity, which in turn can be life improving and even life saving.

We urge you to vote Ought To Pass on this crucial bill, and empower older, informed youth to make decisions about their own gender-affirming care.

Thank you,

Gia Drew (she/her)  
Executive Director, EqualityMaine