

May 12, 2023

Public Hearing for LD 1735 An Act to Safeguard Gender-affirming Health Care (Judiciary Committee)

Testimony submitted by Sara Bulkley (Clinton, ME)

Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Sara Bulkley and I am a resident of Clinton. Thank you for your service on this Committee. Prior to April 3 of this year, I had never participated in this process before but it has become clear that those running our state are not aware of or listening to the voices of Mainers. This is now the third public hearing I have attended in person, to ensure that changes. On that note, I am here to speak in strong opposition to LD 1735.

This bill is deeply troubling. Each time I read it, I am left wondering how the individuals who have joined together to sponsor it could possibly view this as a positive direction to move our state. The nuclear family unit forms the basis of a healthy society and parental rights are foundational to maintaining the integrity of the family. This bill removes those parental rights when a minor child is struggling with gender identity issues and instead, grants them to the court system and anyone who claims to be acting in the best interest of the child. In addition, it completely ties the hands of law enforcement to serve and protect vulnerable minors, as is their responsibility. One must not be a rocket scientist to understand that this is an insane proposition and must not be allowed to become law here in our state.

Gender affirming care is known to be mental and physical health care that assumes a child's perception of themselves is accurate and the body is then adapted chemically and/or surgically to alleviate that "feeling" of discomfort in their body. I have found no instances where this type of care is substantially geared towards helping a child become comfortable in their body as it exists. But until a child reaches adulthood, it is well understood by rational people that their perception and understanding of their body and their brain function and ability to process information is not mature. For this reason, children are not allowed to engage in many activities that we all agree are best reserved for adults. Why would any responsible, compassionate adult suddenly think that it's a good idea to provide permanent treatment that results in sterilization to children who are still immature and may be in a temporary struggle? The number of de-transitioning stories are growing day by day and the devastation left in the wake of this anti-health care is obvious.

My question is this: why are members of this legislative body so eager to support what is clearly child abuse? It is a terrible overstep and abuse of power and we all know it will set a precedent for future battles where elected officials and bureaucrats think they are somehow better qualified to raise other people's children. Do not go down this path. I ask that you vote "Ought Not To Pass" on LD 1735. Thank you.