

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Esteemed members of the committee

My name is Autumn Jackson, I'm a resident of Liberty Maine and I'm here to speak in support of LD 227

Over christmas break in 2022, a 13 year old and 16 year old packed up everything they could into my friends decade old jeep and made the journey from Georgia to Maine. Severe bullying, a suicide attempt, and lack of gender affirming health care options drove these young people and their mother from their home to ours.

These young people are now 14 and 17 and live in a rural town filled with farms in Waldo County. the younger is thriving in a Maine public school, and the older attends a Maine charter school with a focus on ecology. They have friends, their mother has community and the support she needs to support her kids. The 17 year old works for a local restaurant and dreams about attending a UMaine for Marine Biology and then working along the coast, while their younger sibling dreams about owning a farm with lots of ducks.

These young people hope to spend their lives here. Build homes, families, communities, here.

Because of the gender affirming care and affirming education they received here they are thriving and my hope for this committee is that we are ready to welcome more families just like theirs. Ready to welcome them home, and ensure their access to lifesaving care is protected here.