

March 5, 2024

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and members of the Legislative Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Justin Thacker. I live in Andover Maine, and I am here to testify strongly against LD 227, An Act Regarding Health Care in the State. As a Select-Person from Andover and pastor of a church in Rumford for over 20 years I am greatly concerned over this proposed bill, LD 227. It is my opinion that gender affirming surgery or reproductive services for minors (any person under the age of 18) is extremely dangerous, unhealthy, and should be avoided. I am also concerned that parental rights could be limited or ignored all together if this bill passes. No child in the state of Maine should be able to undergo any surgical procedure without the consent and knowledge of a parent or guardian. I am also concerned that a doctor does not have to declare that gender affirming surgery as medically necessary for the surgery to be performed.

To my knowledge there is no religious exemption to a hospital or other service that disagrees with this proposed bill and therefore would be required to perform and/or pay for these services for their patients and religious organizations would have to pay for insurance for their employees who desire this surgery while also providing time off for them to recover from surgery.

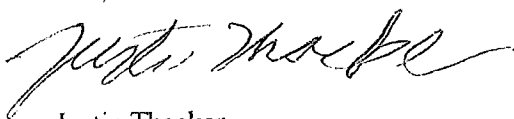
I am hearing from proponents of LD 227 that this bill is about protecting doctors and nurses from being told how to do their job. This bill will therefore keep good doctors and nurses in Maine rather than leaving our state because of current hindrances to their practice. This is news to me. Doctors and nurses are leaving their medical practices in Maine for other reasons such as non-payment from the state and vaccine mandates that violated the conscience of many in the medical profession. Perhaps many in the medical community will begin speaking out over this concern, but to date, I have not heard from them.

Lastly, it is the job of the government to protect our citizens, especially our children. It is God who designed each person as a male or female. Science 101 can prove the fact that boys and girls are biologically different. When you try to take something natural and convert it to something unnatural, you will have great problems, especially for teenagers when they move into young adulthood. Studies (mostly out of Europe) are now beginning to show that children who have gender affirming surgery are more likely to manifest characteristics of suicidal ideation and therefore more likely to commit suicide by the age of 22. According to the National Library of Medicine, 82% of Americans who identify as transgender in 2022 said they have considered killing themselves and 40% have attempted suicide, with the highest percentage of suicides being Trans-Youth. According to the Trevor Project, over 50% of the trans and nonbinary youth had seriously attempted suicide in 2022 which is an increase of 30% from 2021. According to a new study out of the UK, 12% of patients who had gender affirming surgery regretted their decision and 15% of gender affirming surgeries ended up in failure.

Again, please vote no on LD 227.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Thacker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Justin Thacker