My name is Susan Pritchard and I live in Searsport. I am here because I strongly oppose LD 227, particularly due to the risks it poses to families, children and protections under law.

In its broad terminology this bill proposes drastic, permanent measures simply as "health care" and then isolates and exempts it from any legal objection. I have two concerns with this: politically, it reads like a totalitarian edict – the state will determine what is best for your child, there are to be no questions asked. Secondly, if these *were* simply "health care" measures they would not need protections this unique to them; they would not need to be pulled out from the rest of "health care" and given protection so specific to them only. But of course, they are not simply health care. They overreach parental rights, state rights, informed consent practices ...

Countries that delved into gender dysphoria treatment earlier than the U.S. are already stepping back from their own protocols - Sweden, France, Norway, the UK are among those now taking "a more cautious approach to gender-affirming care for minors."[1] But LD 227 would suggest that its proponents are willing to run our children right into harm's way. Our children and those from other states as well. Even against the will of parents who care for their children.

I am angry that our state has failed terribly to protect children, protect their very lives, from abusive parents, but is willing to wrest children away from caring parents, so that they can be raked in as fodder for profit-making entities and a social agenda. I am angry that some of our elected officials are so arrogant that they presume they know better than any and every parent who disagrees with them.

I hope that there are enough of you on this committee who are sane enough to vote "ought not to pass."

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[1] https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2023-07-12/why-european-countries-are-rethinking-gender-affirming-care-for-minors