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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Judiciary Committee. I am in strong opposition to this bill.

The intent of the original bill and law was to provide relief for trans kids, 16-18, who for various reasons, were denied gender-affirming care by their parents or guardians. Trans and other queer kids make up 5-7% of our school populations, but more than 40% of homeless youth. Trans kids are the highest demographic that run away from abusive parents, or are kicked out, more than 80% of trans homeless youth. This abuse is not an aberration, it is the experience of too many transkids. The statistics also show that more than a fourth of those trans kids are approached by sex traffickers within 36 hours. Having a safe, gender-affirming alternative while homeless or unhoused prevents enormous, lifelong harm.

We know that gender-affirming care works. It reduces suicidality rates by 93%. The law this bill wishes to repeal has considerable safeguards in place to protect kids. In order for these kids to access gender affirming care without parental permission requires the assent of a licensed physician, licensed therapist, and a judge. These are strong guardrails to ensure that the medical care being requested is necessary.

I also have strong concerns that this pertains to 18 year olds. I was a serving commissioned officer of Marines, serving 5 years active duty and 7 in the reserves, and 18 year old Marines are pretty common. To think that the decision to put one's life, body and mental health in harm's way is a decision that has less consequences than gender-affirming care is profoundly disturbing. As a teacher, one of my students enlisted right after graduation, and was severely wounded in combat in Iraq. After struggling to adjust for years, he died by suicide. Yet, somehow the vast consequences of military service are not as dire as gender affirming care that has over fifty years of proven, positive results is the narrative we're supposed to believe.

I urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 380.

Thank you.