



Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Lisa Margulies, I serve as Vice President of Public Affairs, Maine, for Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, and I am here today to submit testimony in opposition to LDs 1337 and 1432.

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England provides comprehensive reproductive and sexual health care in approximately 10,000 visits per year in Maine at four health centers located in Biddeford, Portland, Sanford, and Topsham, as well as online via telehealth. People turn to us for affordable, high-quality care including wellness exams, birth control, disease testing and treatment, cancer screenings, gender-affirming care, abortion care, as well as a variety of primary care services.

As a mission driven health care provider, we fundamentally believe everyone should be able to access affordable, high quality sexual and reproductive health care in their communities, no matter where they live or how much money they make, and we advocate for policies that help make this vision a reality. All people deserve to access comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion and gender-affirming care, free from shame, stigma, and intimidation. We see everyone who comes to us regardless of ability to pay, and in a typical year, we provide more than \$1.2 million in free and discounted care to our communities in Maine. For many, we are their only access to the health care system.

Despite the politicization of gender-affirming care and dangerous attacks on transgender and nonbinary people, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England is proud to provide gender-affirming care, and this care is central to our core mission and commitment to bodily autonomy and self-determination. Gender-affirming care is essential health care that is safe and legal in Maine.

Reproductive rights and LGBTQ+ rights are inextricably intertwined. The fight for reproductive freedom and the fight for gender autonomy are rooted in the fundamental right to control our bodies, health care, and our futures. The same politicians that fought for decades to restrict abortion and overturn *Roe v. Wade* are now using that very same playbook to attack transgender and nonbinary people, their rights, and their health care. These politicians are unqualified to make patients' deeply personal, private, and complex medical decisions.

At Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, we are committed to making our state and our country a place where no one faces discrimination or violence because of their gender identity or expression. We know how absolutely necessary it is for everyone to have bodily autonomy and the ability and resources to make their own health care decisions. We all deserve quality health care, and we all deserve to lead our lives with dignity and agency.



Planned Parenthood of Northern New England strives to make sure the gender identities of transgender and nonbinary patients are acknowledged, respected, and understood. We know that when people are truly seen and cared for, their lives, their families' lives, and their communities are better and healthier. Our health services are open to people of all gender identities and sexual orientations because we believe that everyone deserves high-quality, affordable health care—no matter who they are or where they live. We are committed to improving the way transgender and nonbinary people receive health care in our region, and we work with the LGBTQ+ community to eliminate barriers to care.

As a health care provider, we are dedicated to ensuring our patients, staff, and community lead healthy, productive lives. We know that discrimination against transgender and nonbinary people is real and insidious, and we know that it is escalating in the current political climate. This is dangerous for the health and safety of transgender and nonbinary people. Research shows that heightened discrimination against transgender people results in disproportionately high rates of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, and inadequate health care.ⁱ Transgender people also face high rates of harassment and violence, with nearly one in ten physically attacked and one half verbally harassed in the past year because of their gender identity, along with one half experiencing intimate partner violence.ⁱⁱ

These bills attempt to amend the Maine Human Rights Act (MHRA) to eliminate or diminish protections for transgender and nonbinary people. LD 1432 would remove gender identity as a protected class in the MHRA, thereby potentially enabling discrimination on the basis of gender identity in housing, employment, education, public accommodation, and fair credit extension. LD 1337 would remove certain emergency shelters from the MHRA anti-discrimination protections in addition to explicitly carving out "the rights of the female athlete" from the MHRA.

These bills touch on nearly all aspects of the daily lives of transgender and nonbinary Mainers. They have the potential to do real harm and prevent transgender and nonbinary Mainers from leading the healthy, productive, fulfilling lives every one of us deserves. It is particularly cruel and shameful that LD 1337 targets individuals seeking emergency shelter, who are facing threats to their personal safety and in crisis. Moreover, LD 1337's focus on the "female athlete" is a smokescreen to obscure transphobic policy rooted in dis- and misinformation, as discussed in my testimony for LDs 233, 868, 1134, 1704, and 1002.

LDs 1337 and 1432 break with two decades of history and the will of Maine people, who voted against a people's veto attempt of this language 55% to 45%.ⁱⁱⁱ Mainers were abundantly clear at the ballot box in 2005 that they stood for the rights of LGBTQ+ people and their autonomy, freedom, and dignity.



Our rights should not depend on the whims of politicians. Yet politicians are working overtime to attack the rights of transgender people. It is no surprise that the same lawmakers who continue to attack our reproductive rights and access to abortion are also pushing this anti-transgender legislation.

Sadly, these bills are crude attempts to capitalize on the political climate by amplifying mis- and disinformation and stoking fear and prejudice against transgender and nonbinary people. No one is harmed when transgender and nonbinary people are included fully in public life, and we are all enriched by a diversity of perspective and experience. In a moment when LGBTQ+ rights are threatened at the national level, it is essential that our legislature reject attempts to eliminate rights in Maine. Thank you for your commitment to the health and wellbeing, freedom, and dignity of all Mainers.

¹ GLAAD, *Debunking the “Bathroom Bill” Myth*, April 2017, https://media.glaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/25203412/Debunking_the_Bathroom_Bill_Myth_2017-305.pdf

² *Violence Against Trans and Non-Binary People*, VAWnet, <https://vawnet.org/sc/serving-trans-and-non-binary-survivors-domestic-and-sexual-violence/violence-against-trans-and>

³ Randy Billings, *Timeline: Gender identity in Maine’s Human Rights Act*, Portland Press Herald, April 20, 2025, <https://www.centralmaine.com/2025/04/20/timeline-gender-identity-in-maines-human-rights-act/>