



Aspen Ruhlin
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Bangor, ME 04401
May 8, 2025

Public Testimony Regarding LD 380

I would like to begin by thanking the Chairs Senator Carney and Representative Kuhn, along with the rest of the members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Aspen Ruhlin, and I am speaking to you today as a representative of Mabel Wadsworth Center. Mabel's is an independent feminist sexual and reproductive health center that has been providing care in Bangor since 1984. One of our founding values that continues to guide our work more than 40 years since our founding is autonomy. We strongly believe in the right of all people to self-determination. Because of this, we at Mabel Wadsworth Center urge you to vote "ought not to pass" on LD 380.

This bill, which began as an attack on Maine's Shield Law and was pivoted via an amendment to focus instead on attacking LD 535 from 2023, seeks to remove autonomy and access to safe, effective healthcare from transgender youth in Maine. Gender-affirming care has one of the highest satisfaction rates of any medical care available¹. This care is essential² and life-saving³.

Not all youth in Maine are lucky enough to have parents that support and love them as they are. In an ideal world, all parents would prioritize the happiness and wellbeing of their children, including when it comes to accessing healthcare that has been proven to be safe and necessary. Unfortunately, that is not the case, and that is why two years ago we passed a law granting autonomy to 16- and 17-year-old trans Mainers. In those two years, society has not collapsed. None of the fear-mongering lies around the supposed dangers of supporting trans youth have come true. What has happened is trans youth have been able to exercise autonomy and access safe, necessary care under the guidance of experts. Access to this care has been proven to improve both short and long term health outcomes, both in regards to mental health and physical health. Frankly, this is

¹ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2825195>

² <https://www.congress.gov/118/meeting/house/116284/documents/HHRG-118-JU10-20230727-SD020.pdf>

³ [https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(21\)00568-1/fulltext](https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(21)00568-1/fulltext)



not surprising; people lead happier, healthier lives when they have the right to self-determination.

All Mainers deserve the right to autonomy and access to the care that is right for them. An attack on any Mainer's autonomy is an attack on all of ours. For this reason, we at Mabel Wadsworth Center urge you to vote "ought not to pass" on LD 380. Thank you.



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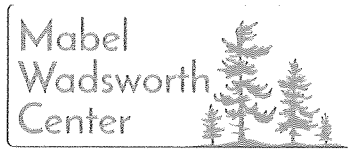
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Feminist. Local. Independent.

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