

To: The Honorable Anne Carney, Senate Chair
The Honorable Amy Kuhn, House Chair
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

DATE: May 8, 2025

RE: LDs 1337, 1432, and 380

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee;

My name is Dawn Walls. I am from the town of Unity. I am testifying in opposition to the bills before the committee today. (LDs 1337, 1432, and 380). I *strongly* oppose these bills for the following reasons:

LD1432 focuses on removing gender identity as a protected class from the Maine Human Rights Act. Doing so would allow for the institutionalized discrimination of all trans people, in many important areas of life. I believe that would violate both state and federal constitutional guarantees of equal protection. In addition, it would create an unconstitutional institutionalized discrimination on the basis of sex, which is also a protected class. Will that be next? I noted that LD1337 mentions sexual orientation as well as gender identity, so clearly there are much wider discriminatory goals involved here. None of these discriminations should be allowed. All people are deserving of a life of dignity as afforded in the MHRA.

LD380 seeks to repeal protections for health care providers who provide certain types of medical care, as well as the people seeking such care as gender affirming care and "reproductive health care services". Prohibiting gender affirming health care for youth will irreparably damage young trans gender people. It is much more complicated to get such care as a more physically developed adult than it is to access it during adolescence. Trans youth need compassion, protection, and support from adults, not more barriers. However, this bill doesn't distinguish between minors or adults – it will effect all gender affirming care, for anyone.

In this bill, the definition of "reproductive health care services" equates that phrase with abortion services, despite the fact that many other services not associated with abortion are included in reproductive health care services, such as birth control, physical examinations, pap-test, STI testing, pregnancy testing, infertility services, and more. These are services provided regardless of sex or gender identity. Such vague or extra inclusive language could have unexpected consequences. Could this bill, with one sweeping motion, eliminate all reproductive health care services?

I have had concerning pap test results on two occasions, many years apart. Irregular cells were removed using a procedure I believe would also fall into the category of reproductive health care. Without the treatments, those cells would inevitably have developed into cancerous cells. Rather than a simple test and a simple procedure, both minimally invasive, I would have had to undergo the devastation of a cancer diagnosis and cancer treatment, twice – maybe involving surgery. I might not be here today. I value our hard working health care providers. They deserve our respect and appreciation, not fear of litigation or harassment. They need these protections to continue to serve Maine citizens without out of state interference.

For all of these reasons, I therefore, *strongly* urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on all of these bills. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee.