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Testimony in opposition:

LD 380, "An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Gender-affirming Health Care Services"

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

May 8, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Laura Harper. I'm a senior associate at Moose Ridge Associates and I live in Hallowell. I am here today on behalf of my client, Maine Family Planning (MFP) to speak against LD 380, "An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Gender-affirming Health Care Services."

MFP provides comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care to teens and adults at 19 locations statewide. Our mission is to ensure that all people have access to high-quality, culturally relevant and affordable sexual and reproductive health care services, comprehensive sexual health education, and the right to control their sexual and reproductive lives. We have been providing gender-affirming hormone therapy since 2012, starting with one site in Lewiston, and now offered at twelve of our clinics and via telehealth.

The former U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Population Affairs defines gender-affirming care as "a supportive form of healthcare. It consists of an array of services that may include medical, surgical, mental health, and non-medical services for transgender and nonbinary people. For transgender and nonbinary children and adolescents, early gender-affirming care is crucial to overall health and well-being as it allows the child or adolescent to focus on social transitions and can increase their confidence while navigating the healthcare system."¹

In 2022, a peer-reviewed study was published in PLOS One, drawing from the largest survey of transgender adults in the United States, the U.S. Transgender Survey. This study, "Access to gender-affirming hormones during adolescence and mental health outcomes among transgender adults,"² found that transgender people who began hormone treatment in adolescence had fewer thoughts of suicide, were less likely to experience major mental health disorders, and had fewer problems with substance abuse than those who started hormones in adulthood.³

¹[Gender-Affirming Care and Young People | HHS Office of Population Affairs](#)

² [Access to gender-affirming hormones during adolescence and mental health outcomes among transgender adults | PLOS One](#)

³ [Better mental health found among transgender people who started hormones as teens | News Center.](#)

Andrew Smith, a young adult fiction author, is credited with the quote, "People fear what they don't understand and hate what they can't conquer." This feels incredibly germane to the topic of transgender rights. Transgender people are estimated to represent between 0.5% and 1.5% of the population in the United States⁴ and they are estimated to experience violent victimization (rape, sexual assault, aggravated/simple assault) at four times the rate of cisgender (people who identify with the sex they were assigned at birth) people.⁵ For the last several years, each year has broken the previous year's record for the number of anti-trans bills introduced nationwide. Trans existence is not some kind of growing threat to our children that we need to protect them from. Trans people have always existed. And we can choose whether we face that fact with curiosity and compassion, or fear and domination.

As one of the largest providers of gender-affirming hormone therapy in our state, we implore the committee to choose the former, vote "ought not to pass" on LD 380, and stand with trans Mainers, including 16- and 17-year-olds, not against them.

Thank you and I'm happy to try and answer any questions.

⁴ [HOW MANY ADULTS AND YOUTH IDENTIFY AS TRANSGENDER IN THE UNITED STATES?](#)

⁵ [Transgender people over four times more likely than cisgender people to be victims of violent crime - Williams Institute](#)



maine family planning

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Testimony in opposition:

LD 1432, "An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Maine Human Rights Act"
LD 1337, "An Act to Amend the Maine Human Rights Act Regarding Female Athletes and Safety in Women's Single-sex Shelters"

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

May 8, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Laura Harper. I'm a senior associate at Moose Ridge Associates and I live in Hallowell. I am here today on behalf of my client, Maine Family Planning (MFP) to speak against LD 1432, "An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Maine Human Rights Act" and LD 1337, "An Act to Amend the Maine Human Rights Act Regarding Female Athletes and Safety in Women's Single-sex Shelters."

MFP provides comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care to teens and adults at 19 locations statewide. Our mission is to ensure that all people have access to high-quality, culturally relevant and affordable sexual and reproductive health care services, comprehensive sexual health education, and the right to control their sexual and reproductive lives. This includes providing high quality gender-affirming care.

We are proud to provide care to our trans patients. Gender-affirming care is lifesaving health care. It is an area of medicine our clinicians are experts in; without the statewide access to this care MFP provides, trans patients would be forced to seek service from less specialized providers. In the calendar year 2024, MFP provided 910 unique patients with gender-affirming care in over 1800 visits statewide. For many of our patients, we are their lifeline to healthcare provided in a supportive environment, with dignity and respect. Unfortunately, this same experience isn't guaranteed for trans Mainers seeking care outside Maine's sexual and reproductive healthcare network. These two bills reflect the bias and transphobia that is all too prevalent and reinforce the stigma and shame our patients deal with every day.

Furthermore, this is the first step in a movement to strip people from historically oppressed groups of their fundamental rights—not just LGBTQ folks, but also people of color, women, immigrants, and many others. Passing these bills, among others, would reward those utilizing bullying tactics and open the door for further attacks on Mainers' civil rights.

Let's be clear: gender policing hurts all of us. How will these bills be enforced? Will women seeking safety in a shelter be forced to submit to a strip search? Will minors have their genitals examined to determine their gender? These bills put *all* women in danger.

Will athletes be subject to chromosomal testing? How will these laws account for intersex individuals? Intersex people may be born with genitalia and chromosomes that do not fit neatly into the category of "womanhood." For example, someone may be born with a uterus and ovaries but XXY chromosomes. Or a uterus, internal testes and XY chromosomes. In fact, many people may not even know that they were born intersex.¹ As experts in sexual and reproductive health, we know that sex and gender do not exist in neat binaries. We know there is no way to police sex and gender without inflicting violence on all people.

Let's instead focus on celebrating Maine's current laws that ensure everyone, regardless of gender identity, has access to basic civil rights. All Mainers deserve the chance to play sports and express their athleticism and also seek shelter when unhoused or fleeing domestic abuse. Please vote "ought not to pass" on both LD 1337 and 1432. Thank you for your attention and I'm happy to try to answer any questions you may have.

¹ InterACT Advocates for Intersex Youth has a helpful FAQ that can be accessed at: <https://interactadvocates.org/faq/>