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LD 227

To those on the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee:  
As a parent and a Maine Taxpayer, I am deeply concerned about LD 227 because this affects minors and their families. Neuro Science (the science of how the brain works) has proven that the human brain is not fully developed until the age of 25. "There are characteristic developmental changes that almost all adolescents experience during their transition from childhood to adulthood. It is well established that the brain undergoes a "rewiring" process that is not complete until approximately 25 years of age." This is from the National Institute of Health. "Investigators have differentiated between "hot" cognition and "cold" cognition.<sup>24</sup> Hot cognition is described as thinking under conditions of high arousal and intense emotion. Under these conditions, teens tend to make poorer decisions. The opposite of hot cognition is cold cognition, which is critical and over-analyzing.<sup>25</sup> In cold cognition, circumstances are less intense and teens tend to make better decisions. Then, with the addition of complex feelings – such as fear of rejection, wanting to look cool, the excitement of risk, or anxiety of being caught – it is more difficult for teens to think through potential outcomes, understand the consequences of their decisions, or even use common sense. " Again all from the website of the NIH. The adolescent brain is not yet fully developed and this affects their ability to fully understand the long-term consequences of their decisions. Therefore; LD 227 is a very slippery slope that does far more harm than good. The irreversible harm the passing of this bill will do to our children and teenagers is far greater than anything they may endure by having to wait until they are 18 years old and closer to "brain maturity" where they are more able to understand the consequences of making an irreversible and permanent change. It's not unusual for a child to temporarily wish they were the opposite sex while going through puberty. No one loves the changes while they are going through them. I went through this myself, wishing I was a boy so that I didn't have to grow breasts and have a monthly period. But it was more about the uncomfortableness of the change happening to my body than it was actually wanting to be a boy. I am so glad I didn't have anyone to encourage me to make an irreversible change because today I am 53 and immeasurably grateful that I am a woman. My children who wouldn't be here otherwise, are the most precious gifts in my life today. Everyone knows that adolescents frequently change their minds and are known for risky behavior. I am opposed to LD 227 and charge you to deem this bill as ought not to pass.