



March 5, 2024
Senator Donna Bailey
Representative Anne Perry
Joint Standing Committee on
Health Coverage, Insurance
and Financial Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 227 - “An Act Regarding Health Care in the State”

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services:

My name is Doug Kimmel and I reside in Hancock. As a retired psychologist member, I am here today to testify on behalf of the Maine Psychologist Association (MePA) in strong support of LD 227 as amended by the sponsor. The Maine Psychological Association (MePA) is a membership organization representing psychologists who work across the state in private practice, at colleges and universities, and in the public sector. Our mission is to advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting health and human welfare.

Our support is based on the 2023 MePA Policy Council approval of a position statement affirming support for LGBTQ+ youth. The statement said that MePA would: “Oppose legislation that is focused on restricting gender-affirming care.”¹ This decision was based on published peer-reviewed state-of-the art psychological research demonstrating the mental health benefits of appropriate affirmative treatment with transgender and gender-questioning youth and adults.

Our support of the current legislation is also based on the American Psychological Association policy statement of February, 2024: “Affirming Evidence-Based Inclusive Care for Transgender, Gender Diverse, and Nonbinary Individuals, Addressing Misinformation, and the Role of Psychological Practice and Science” that states in part:

“THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the American Psychological Association (APA) steadfastly supports evidence-based clinical care for all children, adolescents, and adults inclusive of gender identity and expression; and ...

“THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the APA opposes state bans on gender-affirming care, which

¹ <https://mepa.org/mission-leadership/>

are contrary to the principles of evidence-based healthcare, human rights, and social justice, and which should be reconsidered in favor of policies that prioritize the well-being and autonomy of transgender, gender-diverse, and nonbinary individuals; and ...

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the APA opposes efforts to obstruct access to evidence-based interventions for children, adolescents, and adults, advocating for inclusive healthcare coverage without gender-based discrimination; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the APA emphasizes the importance of psychological and medical care from an intersectional perspective, which takes into consideration the many facets of an individual's experience and provides services that are anti-discriminatory in all areas, including opposing racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, religious, and gender-based discrimination; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the APA urges support for policies facilitating access to comprehensive, gender-affirming healthcare for children, adolescents, and adults, recognizing the positive impact on mental health outcomes."²

Moreover, many MePA members are currently participating in PSYPACT that allows them to provide professional services in other states, some of which might have restrictive laws that could threaten Maine psychologists with legal consequences for practicing state-of-the-art practices of gender-affirming care. Therefore this legislation regarding "Hostile Litigation" would be especially relevant protection for these MePA members.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns.

Sincerely,



Jeff Matranga, Ph.D., ABPP
Board President



Douglas Kimmel, PhD
Co-Chair MePA Legislative
Committee

² <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/transgender-nonbinary-inclusive-care.pdf>