

To: Sen. Bailey, Rep. Perry, and esteemed members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee

Re: Support for LD 227, *An Act Regarding Health Care in the State*

My name is Kris Pitts, and I am a taxpayer and resident of Lewiston, ME. I am writing to strongly urge you to find Ought to Pass in favor of *LD 227, An Act Regarding Health Care in the State*.

As a professional with a career spanning over twenty-five years of service to youth, young adults, individuals, and families who have experienced significant medical and health disparities, I have seen the very real and life-saving outcomes associated with protecting the rights of healthcare professionals and their patients to make decisions based in what is in the best interest of the patient at that time, and what decision the patient will still feel good about in one week, and six months, and two years down the road... These are not decisions states -or other citizens- should be making for these patients; this includes minors when discussing care which they have the legal right to access individually (reproductive healthcare after a certain age, physical and mental healthcare when qualified through McKinney-Vento, etc.).

Additionally, we should be applauding all efforts to safeguard medical records and ensure patient privacy, and it would be a gross misstep to fail to recognize that it is not uncommon for folks of all ages to travel to other states to seek medical care of all kinds. As a member of multiple LGBTQAI2S+ communities, I also deeply understand the difference having safe, supportive, and understanding adults and providers can make in the life of a young person. Having one's chosen name and correct pronouns used is associated with a 29% decrease in suicidal ideation, as well as a 56% decrease in suicidal behavior.⁴ Whether it is a parent, guardian, or other safe and supportive adult, supporting young people in accessing gender-affirming care is suicide prevention and we have already lost too many members of our communities to irrational hate and injustice.

Fearmongering around lifesaving and heavily regulated medical practices such as gender affirming care and abortion (gender affirming surgical procedures -which are only one part of gender affirming care, yet are seemingly the focus of tremendous concern- having a 1% regret rate¹ as compared to the 22% regret rate² associated with total knee replacement surgery, or the 95% of those opting for abortion who believe they made the correct decision³ post-procedure), combined with a lack of understanding by some surrounding the contents of LD 227, is no reason to fail to support this bill; I strongly urge you to take just action and fully support LD 227, keeping Maine on the correct side of history in this matter.

In community,



Kris Pitts, MPS, MSW

¹Bruce L, Khouri AN, Bolze A, Ibarra M, Richards B, Khalatbari S, Blasdel G, Hamill JB, Hsu JJ, Wilkins EG, Morrison SD, Lane M. Long-Term Regret and Satisfaction With Decision Following Gender-Affirming Mastectomy. *JAMA Surg.* 2023 Oct 1;158(10):1070-1077. doi: 10.1001/jamasurg.2023.3352. PMID: 37556147; PMCID: PMC10413215.

²Mahdi A, Svantesson M, Wretenberg P, Hälleberg-Nyman M. Patients' experiences of discontentment one year after total knee arthroplasty- a qualitative study. *BMC Musculoskelet Disord.* 2020 Jan 14;21(1):29. doi: 10.1186/s12891-020-3041-y. PMID: 31937282; PMCID: PMC6961288.

³Rocca CH, Kimport K, Gould H, Foster DG. Women's emotions one week after receiving or being denied an abortion in the United States. *Perspect Sex Reprod Health.* 2013 Sep;45(3):122-31. doi: 10.1363/4512213. Epub 2013 Aug 2. PMID: 24020773.

⁴Songsawatwong, M. (2023, June 23). *Gender health: Use chosen pronouns for more inclusive care.* Children's Minnesota. <https://www.childrensmn.org/2023/06/23/gender-health-use-chosen-pronouns-inclusive-are/#:~:text=Respectful%20and%20possibly%20lifesaving,56%25%20decrease%20in%20suicidal%20behavior.>