

Jennifer Walsh
Scarborough
LD 227

March 5, 2024

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Members of the Health Coverage Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Jennifer Walsh. I live in Scarborough, and I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 227.

I have been a teacher for 32 years, and I have worked with over 1,000 children. I have two children of my own. Over this time, I have witnessed the increasing challenges that many have faced.. According to the CDC, “About 64% of U.S. adults reported they had experienced at least one type of [Adverse Childhood Experience] before age 18, and nearly 1 in 6 (17.3%) reported they had experienced four or more types of ACEs.” (<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html>). Add to ACES the impacts resulting from Covid- emotional, developmental and academic- along with the emotional impact of social media, the result is an overwhelming number of vulnerable children and young adults. The impact on their lives can be significant; If you add being gender diverse, the stakes can be beyond overwhelming. Their lives are even more at risk.

According to the NIH study Mental Health Outcomes in Transgender and Nonbinary Youths Receiving Gender-Affirming Care (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35212746/>) the study’s authors “observed 60% lower odds of depression (adjusted odds ratio [aOR], 0.40; 95% CI, 0.17-0.95) and 73% lower odds of suicidality (aOR, 0.27; 95% CI, 0.11-0.65) among youths who had initiated PBs or GAHs compared with youths who had not.” You have the opportunity to protect our children to access this care. You also will have the blood of these possible suicides on your hands if you choose to not support this.

If your belief system is not aligned with this, perhaps consider the economic impact on Maine- the cost of mental health, heart disease, and the time lost at work on our system. These impacts are on families, not just individuals.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 227. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Walsh
Scarborough