

LD380

Hello Committee

I hope this is the last time you will have to hear from me for a while in consideration of anti-trans legislation. (It's Marissa Bickford, Concerned Westbrook Citizen). Did you remember to hydrate?

As someone who both works with minors and receives gender-affirming health care, this one really hit home for me.

We could rename this bill something like "Forcing physicians to give sub-optimal care to children". That doesn't really have a ring to it, does it?

Gender Affirming Care works. The statistics are in. It's one of the only things that does. It prevents death - by suicide, eating disorder, drug overdose. And there are already enough hurdles to get it. When I was receiving my care I had to establish myself with a licensed therapist and have then send a letter to my endocrinologist approving my treatment. That may not sound like a lot, but for someone to navigate these medical systems in the depths of suicidal depression, it was nearly insurmountable. I would not wish that on a child.

And I would hope that child or teen would have a kind and supportive adult to help them navigate these system to get them what they need, but more likely than not, queer children feel alone in navigating these hurdles. Sometimes parents and guardians are even unsafe to go to. Children and teens can be denied care for years (and those years can be the difference between life and death) or face domestic violence, or be kicked out of their homes.

Lastly, Repealing Maine's Shield Law would subject Maine's already-strained healthcare infrastructure to out-of-state criminal prosecutions for providing standard-of-care health care as legally allowed in this state. Maine state law has allowed doctors and patients to safely give and receive the care they need, and LD380 would especially cause great harm to health care providers.

This is all around a bad deal for Mainers, especially our future generation. I cannot support it and neither should you.

-Riss