

Benjamin Bouchard
BAR HARBOR
LD 380

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak on this matter. I am testifying in opposition to LD 380.

A fundamental concept of good governance is that for any bill to pass or new law to be made, it must demonstrate a clear need or a benefit to society. LD 380 would needlessly limit the ability of trans youth to access important healthcare, and legal restriction without merit is intolerable in decent society.

Trans youth commonly face discrimination and even abuse or estrangement from unsupportive parents, and those persons should not be able to prevent trans youth from accessing healthcare that is proven by thorough research to have meaningful positive impacts on their health and well-being with substantially lower regret than the baseline average with other forms of life saving medical care.

The ability of trans youth to make educated decisions about their own health should not be impinged. A false pseudoscientific factoid often brought up in these situations is that our brains do not fully mature until age 25. This is patently false and an incorrect conclusion reached by paraphrasing a study on structural changes in the brain that only examined patients UP TO the age of 26, and further research shows that the brain continues to change over the course of our entire lives. We trust in the sound decision-making skills of 16-year-olds enough to put give them drivers licenses when automobiles carry not merely potentially life-altering but life-ENDING risks in their operation, not only to the driver, but to those around them. The mind of a 16 year old youth is more than fully capable of making informed decisions in accessing healthcare for their own benefit.

On these grounds and beyond, not only is there no need for or demonstrable benefit to this proposed legislation, but it would cause active HARM to Maine trans youth, and should be soundly rejected.