

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee yet gain today.

My name is Stacie Bourassa and I live in Biddeford, Maine. I am a board member of PFLAG Portland Maine, and the parent of an adult trans child.

Given that I have stood before you now on three occasions today to oppose anti-trans legislation, I don't think it's lost on any of us that there is a pattern to these bills. Some folks clearly don't like trans people, and they are trying to use you all to legislate them out of existence.

Regarding 16- and 17-year-olds consenting to gender-affirming hormone therapy and follow-up care; removing this right for near-adults to control their bodies feels intentionally targeted and damaging to these young people.

Our Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) data shows that Maine's LGBTQ students are much more likely to face violence and discrimination at home and at school and are less likely to have supportive adults in their lives. **They're also 3 times more likely to seriously consider suicide.**

A study by The Trevor Project found that gender-affirming care is associated with lower rates of depression, suicidal thoughts, and suicide attempts among transgender and nonbinary youth. Another study published in JAMA Network Open highlighted that gender-affirming care, which includes respecting chosen names and pronouns, significantly reduces the risk of self-harm and suicidal thoughts. Research has also shown that gender-affirming hormone therapy, which often accompanies the use of chosen names and pronouns, is linked to a lower risk of suicide and depression in transgender youth.

These findings underscore the critical importance of affirming a child's gender identity to support their mental health and well-being. I'm not a doctor or a clinician, and I don't have to be to understand this science and research. It would have to be ignored for any of you to support repealing the provisions enacted by Public Law 2023, chapter 413.

At 16, I had a job, mostly As, a relationship, and autonomy. I made my own doctor's appointments and paid my own copays. And I managed my birth control options. 16- and 17-year-olds do not need adults telling them how to manage their bodies and healthcare. They need the trust and freedom to lean into becoming the adults they will be regardless of someone else's beliefs or ideals.

Thank you for your time and consideration. **Please vote "Ought not to Pass" on LD 380.** If you care about kids, you won't remove protective factors from a group with increased risk factors.