

May 8, 2025

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Patti Forster, and I am a longtime educator at Camden Hills Regional High School with over three decades of classroom experience. I currently serve as president of the Maine Council for English Language Arts and am the 2021 Knox County Teacher of the Year and the 2020 Maine State English Teacher.

I submit this testimony in strong opposition to LD 380, a bill that seeks to roll back essential protections for those seeking and providing gender-affirming and reproductive health care in Maine.

LD 380 would repeal provisions enacted in Public Law 2023, chapter 648—provisions that currently protect patients, health care practitioners, and supporters of gender-affirming and reproductive health care from legal harassment or retaliation. Repealing these protections is not only regressive; it is dangerous. It would expose health care providers to legal threats simply for delivering medically necessary care and would endanger the lives of transgender individuals seeking basic, evidence-based treatment.

Gender-affirming health care is supported by every major medical and mental health association in the United States, including the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Psychiatric Association. These services are often life-saving and are delivered in accordance with rigorous, peer-reviewed standards of care. This bill threatens to undermine the ability of qualified professionals to provide such care safely, and worse, it signals that transgender people do not deserve equal access to health and safety.

LD 380 is not about policy—it is about politics. It would invite out-of-state interference, legal intimidation, and surveillance into deeply personal health decisions that should remain between individuals, their families, and their providers. In our classrooms, we teach students to think critically, lead with compassion, and respect the dignity of others. This bill sends the opposite message: that fear and discrimination should shape our laws.

Repealing protections for those involved in gender-affirming and reproductive health care would have chilling effects across our state. Providers may leave or limit services. Patients may delay or forgo essential care. Communities will fracture under the weight of mistrust and fear. Our state will become less safe, less just, and less compassionate.

I urge this committee to reject LD 380 and to uphold Maine's commitment to protecting both patients and practitioners in providing and accessing critical health services. Let us move forward, not backward—toward a future where all Mainers, including transgender individuals, can live with dignity, safety, and access to the care they need.

Thank you for your time and commitment to justice.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patti Forster". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patti Forster