

Rosalie Genova, LCPC, CCS
Portland

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee
Judiciary:

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee. I am licensed clinical mental health counselor (LCPC, Maine CC 4978) testifying in opposition to SP 145, An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Gender-affirming Health Care Services.

As a mental health provider who works with transgender clients, I wish to address some misunderstandings about them and their health care needs. Firstly, my transgender clients are focused on paying their bills and taking care of their families. The present costs of food, housing, and health care affect them just the same as all other Mainers. Transgender issues are often framed as a “distraction” or as separate from the concerns of a general population, but in fact there is no such distinction.

My transgender clients’ health care needs, too, are largely the same as those of all other Mainers. When it comes to gender-affirming care, legislation opposing it may be intended to make transgender people “change their minds” and go back to identifying with their sex assigned at birth. This reaction, to not being able to access care, is one I have never seen in real life. Clients facing denial or forcible termination of their gender-affirming care are more likely to discuss thoughts of suicide than thoughts of changing their identities.

Finally, I wish to dispel any notion that transgender health care is an affront to religious principles or to people of faith. I am not a pastoral counselor, but personal Christian convictions are behind my providing gender-affirming counseling, my testifying against this legislation, and my advocacy against the current national movement to scapegoat transgender Americans.

Please vote against this bill, urge your colleagues to do the same, and keep the legislature focused on Mainers’ real needs. Thank you.

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LD 380

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