

Patricia Goodhines
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LD 380

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Bangor, Maine
May 8, 2025

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

As a clinical psychologist, I know that bills like LD 380 are quite literally a matter of life or death for some of our state's most vulnerable youth.

GENDER AFFIRMING CARE SAVES LIVES; it is a simple fact, corroborated by leading healthcare organizations like the American Psychological Association. Trans youth are already at increased risk for depression and suicide due to chronic stress, bullying, and inadequate safety in schools, communities, and homes. These stressors can be exacerbated in rural areas, like much of our state, due to isolation and lack of resources. But the good news is that teens with access to gender affirming care, particularly those in otherwise unsupportive environments, go on to become happier and healthier adults. That's what I want for my community, personally.

So why would we take away teens' autonomy in consenting to lifesaving healthcare? Amidst an ongoing nationwide youth mental health crisis, vulnerable Maine youth deserve support, autonomy, and safety--not the misguided cruelty proposed by LD 380. Gender-affirming care should remain one of the SEVERAL areas of healthcare where minors can ALREADY consent on their own in Maine, such as mental healthcare.

Maine must stand up against the national political agenda interfering with our rights to make our own laws. Bills such as this would un-do years of progress and trailblazing leadership, setting a dangerous precedent for more extreme anti-trans legislation to further endanger our communities. Changes to Maine law are unnecessary, and help no one.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on LD 380. Thank you.