

[LD 380](#) *An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Gender-affirming Health Care Services* - Sen. David Haggan of Penobscot

Testimony to Maine Legislature Judiciary Committee

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong opposition to LD 380. I am a Mainer, human rights professional, and a family member and friend to numerous trans individuals who have undergone hormone replacement therapy and accessed gender-affirming healthcare which has allowed them to live joyful, fulfilling lives. My trans family and friends include mental health professionals, a professor, youth-serving professionals, policy advocacy professionals, my Peace Corps recruiter who helped me navigate the decision to join up after college, among others. They are thriving individuals who contribute much to our society because of the gender-affirming healthcare they received as youth, young adults, and in adulthood.

This bill would revoke the ability of 16- and 17-year-olds to consent to gender-affirming hormone therapy and related care, even after thorough clinical assessment. It removes a crucial safeguard for youth who may not have supportive guardians and would force delays in care that medical experts consider urgent and life-affirming.

Gender-affirming care is endorsed as medically necessary by every major U.S. medical association, including the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics. A 2022 *New England Journal of Medicine* study found that gender-affirming hormone therapy significantly reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety among trans youth over the course of one year. Another 2022 study in *JAMA Network Open* found that adolescents receiving gender-affirming care reported 60% lower odds of moderate to severe depression and 73% lower odds of self-harm or suicidal thoughts compared to those who did not receive care.

Access to this care is not granted lightly. It follows established clinical guidelines that require informed consent, mental health evaluation, and, when feasible, parental involvement. But for some youth, home environments are unsupportive or unsafe. The current law helps ensure that qualified older teens can still receive critical, evidence-based care under the supervision of licensed providers.

The stakes are high. A 2021 study published in *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health* found that access to gender-affirming care was associated with improved quality of life, higher self-esteem, and better long-term mental health outcomes. Conversely, denial of this care has been linked to higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide attempts among transgender youth.

LD 380 puts politics ahead of public health. It is yet another cynical ploy by partisan members of this body who put politics before people. We—Mainers—are better than this.

I respectfully urge the Committee to vote “Ought Not to Pass” to ensure that all Maine youth—including transgender youth—can access the care they need to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.