

Rylan Hynes  
14 Bridge Street  
Hallowell, ME 04347

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the group today. My name is Rylan Hynes of Hallowell, and I am a member of Maine's transgender community. LD 380, An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Gender-affirming Health Care Services, is one of many proposals that is being considered today attacking transgender Mainers, and I am writing to express my staunch opposition to this bill.

I can only imagine how much happier and healthier I would have been as a young transgender person if I had access to gender-affirming care. I didn't even know that such a thing was an option as a child. I wish I had. What I did know as a kid was that I frequently didn't feel right in my body; that no matter how I lived my life, *if* I lived my life, I would not be able to live as myself. Life, at times, seemed impossible.

The messages that I learned then stayed with me for many years. Throughout that time I experienced serious depression, feeling miserable even when other aspects of my life were going well. It was not until many years later as an adult that I came to know that in fact, there were medical options for people like me, and that I did have the power to take care of my body in ways that would make me feel healthier and happier. Like life was worth living.

I am eternally grateful to the healthcare providers that made it possible for me to be writing this to you today. Providers who practice gender affirming care are practicing life saving care, and they deserve protection under the law. Gender affirming care providers have been framed across the country as being complicit in genital mutilation on youth, when in fact, nothing could be further from the truth. These procedures and treatments have proven positive outcomes. 1% (or fewer) patients express regret after undergoing gender affirming surgeries. Compare that with regret rates of having breast reconstruction (up to 47%), breast augmentation (up to 9%), 19.5% for bariatric surgery, or 30% following prostate removal surgery. People are more likely to regret having children (7%) or getting a tattoo (16%) than to regret undergoing gender affirming surgery. (I am sure many people with Harry Potter tattoos can relate.)

Maine must continue to protect gender-affirming care for all ages, and the providers who offer these vital services. Their work and expertise has kept me alive. It is the least I can do in return to urge you once more to oppose LD 380, and encourage you to uphold Maine's Shield Law.

Thank you for your time.

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