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LD 380

To the members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Dr Stephanie Joy. I am from Freeport. I am a cis woman, a wife, a mother, and a pediatrician practicing primary care in Maine. I have been practicing medicine for 15 years (plus 7 years of training before that) and consider myself an expert in pediatric care.

I am submitting this testimony very late into the day because the untruths I am hearing make it impossible to remain silent. Senator David Haggan was presenting this bill and many of the facts he gave in support were outright false. In the state of Maine, I know many gender-affirming medical care physicians and not a single one will treat a patient under 18 without parental consent. Period. Full stop. Not with puberty blockers, not with surgery, not with gender-affirming hormones.

However, in the state of Maine, a minor can seek care for mental health conditions, sexual health, and contraception without parental consent and both patient and prescriber are protected under confidentiality laws. There are obviously limitations to this law: if there are safety concerns (including age of the patient if appropriate) the guardians must be notified and care will not be rendered without their consent and involvement. Another speaker mentioned that teenagers can "dictate their mental health treatment," and this is also incorrect. We always try to make sure parents or guardians are involved, but adolescents have the right to speak to a medical professional without guardians present. That is the law. Senator Haggan asserted that medical care cannot be legally provided without parental consent for children under 18, but he is incorrect. As a former middle school social studies teacher, he may be getting his information from a different place, but as a medical doctor who does this work every day, I can tell you his facts are wrong.

He also referenced the "high" number of people who detransition. This is also incorrect. It is well-known in the trans literature that the actual detransition rate is very low. A 2022 study of 27,715 respondents showed a somewhat high detransition rate of 13.1%. Tellingly, an alarmingly high 82.5% reported there was at least one external factor in their detransition, such as pressure from a family member or societal stigma (LGBT Health. 2021 May-Jun;8(4):273-280. doi: 10.1089/lgbt.2020.0437. Epub 2021 Mar 31.).

As I mentioned in other testimony I submitted for earlier bills, I do not envy you the task you have before you, the mountains of information you have to read through, and the intense emotions from everyone involved. Please, listen to the experts. Listen to the people doing the work. Listen to the people living it. These bills are cruel, ignorant, dangerous, and harmful. I urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on all of the anti-trans bills proposed today. Thank you for the time you have all put into this and I hope you all get lots of sleep tonight.