

126 Sewall Street  
Augusta, Maine 04330-6822  
TTY/Voice: (207) 626-7058  
www.maineequaljustice.org



**Kathy Kilrain del Rio**  
Advocacy & Programs Director  
(207) 626-7058, ext. 210  
kathy@mejp.org

## **MEJ Testimony *in opposition* to LD 380, An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Gender-affirming Health Care Services**

May 8, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Kathy Kilrain del Rio, I use she/her pronouns, and I'm the Advocacy and Programs Director for Maine Equal Justice, a nonprofit legal aid provider working to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity for people in Maine. Our organization has decades of experience working with people with low incomes to support access to health care, food security, housing security, education and training programs, and other programs that support individuals and families in moving toward financial security so they can thrive. I'm testifying in opposition to LD 380.

Gender-affirming health care saves lives. Let me say that again. Gender-affirming care saves lives. That should be all you need to hear to know that you must reject this bill.

You've heard testimony all day from trans people of all ages about their lived experiences facing bullying, discrimination, and violence. Laws like Maine's that affirm the existence of trans people and recognizes the importance of providing access to this necessary health care help pushback on those harmful experiences that are far too-often a common occurrence for trans people – especially trans youth.

Sadly, some trans youth cannot live safely as themselves within their own families. For those who are 16- or 17-years old, Maine law provides a common-sense approach for them to access life-affirming gender-affirming care. We should not go backwards by repealing this option for these young adults who know themselves better than anyone else can.

I could provide links to make studies that demonstrate the importance for the mental health and overall wellbeing of gender-affirming care for young people. The importance of this care in reducing suicides and helping young people thrive. But you've heard that data all day. I don't think you need that data to know what is right. All you need to know is that gender-affirming care saves lives. It saves the lives of young people and our existing law shows them that Maine respects their gender identity and trusts them to work with medical providers to determine the best care for each of them.

Please vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 380 to ensure we continue to provide necessary, life-saving, gender-affirming care to those young people who need it even when their parents don't understand or even reject their gender identity. Thank you.