



Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
May 8, 2025

In opposition to:

LD 380 An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Gender-affirming Health Care Services (as amended)

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

I am Rev. Jane Field, Executive Director of the **Maine Council of Churches**, a coalition of seven Protestant denominations with 400 congregations in Maine and 50,000 parishioners.

You've already heard today about the Council's values and beliefs and our denominations' **love and support for our transgender and nonbinary siblings, especially transgender youth**—who experience worse mental health outcomes than their cisgender peers, including higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide attempts.

The Council **opposes passage of the bill before you** because of its potential to harm these beloved and vulnerable trans teenagers.

Current Maine law allowing 16- and 17-year-olds with gender dysphoria to receive gender-affirming hormone therapy without parental consent only **applies to those who have discussed their diagnosis with a parent who then refused to support appropriate medical treatment** (as gender-affirming hormone therapy is considered to be by every major medical organization in the U.S.—American Medical, Psychological, and Psychiatric Associations, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, among others).

Studies show that delaying treatment for gender dysphoria results in more adverse mental health outcomes. Parents who refuse to support treatment are **putting their teenager at risk** for serious depression and suicide **by denying them access to potentially life-saving therapy for as much as two years**.

Allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to consent to treatment without parental permission has been well established in federal and state policy for things like contraception, testing and treatment for STI's, prenatal care and delivery services, treatment for drug and alcohol abuse, and outpatient mental health care—necessary care they might otherwise avoid due to fear of disclosing to parents.

Many 16- and 17-year-olds are drive, work, and attend school independently. Allowing them to make medical decisions aligns with the level of autonomy they exercise in other areas of their lives.

If you eliminate the language in Maine statutes providing a way for 16- and 17-year-olds with gender dysphoria to get treatment if their parents don't support them, you will be putting these teenagers at serious risk. The law provides a way for them to get potentially life-saving therapy one to two years earlier than they otherwise could. **It saves lives. Why on earth would you want to repeal it?**

Please vote "OUGHT NOT TO PASS" on this bill.