

Maine Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MAINE

American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

Executive Committee

President

Laura Blaisdell, MD, MPH, FAAP

Vice President

Brian Youth, MD, FAAP

Treasurer

Christopher Motyl, DO, FAAP

Secretary

Genevieve Whiting, MD, FAAP

Immediate Past President

Deborah Q. Hagler, MD, MPH, FAAP

Board of Directors

Mahmuda Ahmed, MD, FAAP

Joseph Anderson, DO, FAAP

Amy Buczkowski, MD, FAAP

Melissa Burch, MD, FAAP

Adrienne Carmack, MD, FAAP

Gabriel Civiello, MD, FAAP

Anne Coates, MD, FAAP

Alyssa Goodwin, MD, FAAP

Dan Hale, MD, FAAP

Riley Heroux**

Jennifer Jewell, MD, MS, FAAP

Stephanie Joy, MD, FAAP

Emily Keller, MD, FAAP

Alton Kremer, MD, PhD, FAAP

Michele Labotz, MD, FAAP

Maria Libertin, MD*

Lawrence Losey, MD, FAAP

Valerie O'Hara, DO, FAAP

Gita Rao, MD, FAAP

Sydney Sewall MD, MPH, FAAP

Austin Wheeler Steward**

Jeffrey Stone, DO, FAAP

Mary Tedesco-Schneck, PhD, NP

Andrea Tracy, MD, FAAP

Aaron Wallace, MD*

*Resident Board Representatives

**Medical Student Representatives

Staff

Dee Kerry, BS Ed

Executive Director

Emily Belanger, RN, BSN

Admin & Project Coordinator

30 Association Drive, Box 190

Manchester, ME 04351

office: 207-480-4185

www.maineap.org

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO: LD 678: An Act to Require Parental Approval for Public School Employees to Use a Name or Pronoun Other than a Child's Given Name or Pronoun Corresponding to the Gender on the Child's Birth Certificate

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and distinguished members of the Committee on Judiciary, my name is Mahmuda Ahmed. I am a resident of Glenburn, an active pediatric endocrinologist in Bangor, and an active board member of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I am writing today to express my opposition to LD 678: *An Act to Require Parental Approval for Public School Employees to Use a Name or Pronoun Other than a Child's Given Name or Pronoun Corresponding to the Gender on the Child's Birth Certificate*. **We ask that you vote Not to Pass on this bill.**

As we have discussed with many of the previous proposed legislation, confidentiality and independent consent is extremely important for adolescent health and safety. Less than 40% of LGBTQ adolescents live in LGBTQ-affirming homes.² These youth are unable to have supportive environments at home and can experience this only at school. The Legal Guidance on Transgender Student Rights clearly outlines that trans-youth students have equal rights to educational opportunities, the right to transition at school with expression of said gender and the right not to be compelled to provide personal or medical information to school officials. It also outlines that school officials must not disclose personal information about the transgender student without the student's consent³. Students have the right to control the disclosure of the highly personal and confidential information from others including other students, parents/guardians, or other school personnel.

Not all children who experience gender dysphoria have a safe home life and disclosing this sensitive information to non-affirming parents/guardians could lead to unsafe situations including attempted conversion, violence, or threats of homelessness. The process towards familial acceptance and understanding can be challenging and unfortunately parental acceptance is not always attained. During this tumultuous period, students can still live in their affirmed gender with fully reversible social transition.

Gender dysphoria is a well-recognized medical diagnosis with established and effective treatments. The first aspect of treatment; social affirmation allows adolescents to make decisions about their own gender in the safety of their school, with the discretion to maintain privacy. These youth need to be given the respect to choose their affirmed name and pronouns in the safety of their school without requiring parental permission. This time will allow them to better understand and explore their gender and take ownership of their bodies promoting a sense of well-being and affirmation.

We believe this amended bill discredits youth and places them in potential risk for unsafe circumstances in their home. This bill will lead to undue distress and further dysphoria for these adolescent youth and is not designed to prioritize what is in the best interest of these students. These students should have the right to choose their preferred name and pronoun without parental approval. **We urge you to oppose this bill and vote Not to Pass on LD 678.**

Respectfully,
Mahmuda Ahmed, MD, FAAP

¹ Sofya Maslyanskaya, Elizabeth M. Alderman; Confidentiality and Consent in the Care of the Adolescent Patient. *Pediatr Rev* October 2019; 40 (10): 508–516.

² The Trevor Project. 2023 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People. https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2023/assets/static/05_TREVOR05_2023survey.pdf

³ NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION – LEGAL GUIDANCE ON TRANSGENDER STUDENTS' RIGHTS, Lily Eskelesen Garcia, Rebecca Pringle, Princess Moss, Eric Brown, Kevin Gilbert, Maury Koffman, Shelly Moore Krajacic, George Sheridan, Earl Wiman, John Stocks. June 2016.