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Testimony of Rep. Anne Perry introducing

LD 227, An Act Regarding Health Care in the State

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance & Financial Services

Senator Bailey and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Anne Perry and I represent House District 9. I am here today to present LD 227, An Act Regarding Health Care in the State.

The purpose of this bill is to ensure access to healthcare; both in terms of patients seeking care, the people that help patients access this care and the providers that deliver that care.

What this bill does, is make clear that access to reproductive healthcare and gender-affirming care are legally protected in Maine. This bill also aims to protect patients from having their medical records shared with law enforcement agencies in other states while also protecting providers by allowing them to participate in the state's address confidentiality program. Safeguards are included in this bill, as providers shouldn't worry about potential impacts to their professional licensing as a result of delivering this care, nor should they fear legal action from out of state agencies, and this legislation will help enforce that. Unfortunately, we have already seen this in the United States, with Texas recently seeking medical records of children from Texas who received gender-affirming care in Seattle. This bill will codify those protections and protect access to this critical medical care.

Specifically, this bill:

- Clarifies that access to reproductive healthcare and essential medical care for transgender people are legally protected in Maine.
- Protects Maine patients from having their medical records about protected healthcare shared with law enforcement agencies in other states where such care is banned.
- Ensures Maine's resources are not used to further hostile litigation from states where essential healthcare is banned, except where required by federal law.
- Protects the personal contact information of healthcare providers by allowing reproductive and gender-affirming care providers to participate in the state's address confidentiality program.
- Aims to mitigate the risk of out-of-state enforcement of laws against reproductive healthcare and gender-affirming healthcare providers in our state to patients seeking care in Maine.

District 9: Grand Lake Stream Plantation, Passamaquoddy Indian Township, Baileyville, Baring Plantation, Calais, Meddybemps, Robbinston, Perry, Passamaquoddy Pleasant Point and Eastport

- Creates a civil right of action to counter hostile litigation from other states seeking to penalize providers of healthcare in Maine.
- Safeguards providers from negative impacts on their livelihoods, including professional licensing and malpractice insurance, for practicing standard-of-care reproductive and gender-affirming healthcare in Maine.

We have Mainers and patients who come to Maine in need of reproductive healthcare or gender-affirming care, and as a legislature, we cannot ignore this. During a time when we are seeing an increase in restrictions on abortion and gender-affirming care across the country, Maine needs to be a leader and defend our patients and providers.

This bill reinforces the fact that Mainers have control over their own bodies and healthcare decisions. We have a duty to govern for everybody, and that means ensuring access to quality, confidential medical care for those that need it.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to try to answer any questions you may have.