



Maine Women's Lobby

THE VOICE OF MAINE WOMEN

Public Comment on Section 1557 – Health Care Rights Law
Maine Women's Lobby
August 13, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Whitney Parrish, and I am the Director of Policy and Programs for the Maine Women's Lobby. The Maine Women's Lobby is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, statewide organization devoted to raising the economic, social, and political status of Maine's 678,000 women and girls. I am writing to oppose the proposed rule changes to Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as the Health Care Rights Law.

Everyone should be able to access the health care they need without fear of being turned away, shamed, or treated unfairly. This rule would reintroduce discrimination into the health care setting by rolling back a key non-discrimination provision of the ACA. This rule targets abortion and health care involving gender identity specifically, but its harmful provisions would enshrine discrimination in virtually all facets of health care. Abortion is health care – and all of us – no matter who we are, deserve health care free from discrimination. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) should not be emboldening providers to discriminate against patients. Instead, HHS needs to leave politics out of its rule making process and commit to protect individuals' health and well-being and seek ways to address the real discrimination that women, LGBTQ people, and others face every day.

Discrimination in the health care setting makes it harder for those who already face multiple barriers to care, including communities of color, LGBTQ individuals, people facing language barriers, and those struggling to make ends meet. Here in Maine, we are working every day to make sure **all** Mainers can access the high quality, affordable health care they need, free from discrimination. This has been part of our organization's mission for the past 41 years and will continue to be so long as discrimination persists.

Patients should not have to fear or worry about being turned away or discriminated against because of who they are, who they love, the color of their skin, what they look like, where they're from, what services they're seeking, what language they speak, or whether they have a disability.

Patients' lives across the country are at risk. Please stop this rule today.

Sincerely,

Whitney Parrish
Director of Policy and Programs, Maine Women's Lobby