

Testimony in Support of LD 537

Jen Coursey
46 Central Street
Winthrop, ME 04364

February 27, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Sachs, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Jen Coursey and I am here today as a concerned parent, a citizen of Maine who was born and educated in this state, and someone who believes in the fundamental right to privacy and safety - especially for our children. I urge you to support LD 537, a bill that would prohibit the doxing of minors and provide a necessary civil remedy for those affected.

Doxing is an act of cruelty. It weaponizes personal information, exposing children to threats, harassment, and real-world harm. Minors, by definition, lack the resources and autonomy to protect themselves in the same way that adults can. It is our responsibility - as parents, lawmakers, and community members - to ensure that they are not put in harm's way by bad actors with access to a keyboard.

Some opponents of this bill have argued that social media is still new and that lawmakers are still learning how to adapt. That is not a justification for inaction - it is an excuse. Bullying is not new. Harassment is not new. Publicly targeting children and exposing them to danger is not new. What is new is the ease and speed with which it can happen. If representatives cannot keep up with the realities their constituents - especially their youngest, most vulnerable, constituents - face every day, then they have failed at their job.

As a parent of a transgender teenager, I am acutely aware of how dangerous doxing can be. LGBTQ+ youth are already at disproportionate risk of bullying and violence. Publicizing their personal information is not just an invasion of privacy; it's an invitation to harm. No child, regardless of their gender identity, background, or circumstances, should have to live in fear that their name, home address, or school will be shared with strangers who wish them ill.

But you don't have to be the parent of a trans child to understand the stakes here. No one in the legislature - no parent, no grandparent, no guardian - would be comfortable with their own child's personal details being broadcast to the world. This bill isn't about politics; it's about basic human decency. It's about ensuring that all children in Maine, no matter who they are, have the right to safety and privacy. Many of the same voices who say that every life matters do not seem to recognize the disconnect when they come out against this bill. If we say that every life matters, then that principle cannot be abandoned the moment a child no longer fits a political agenda. Our duty to protect children extends to ensuring they have the safety and support needed to grow into adults.

LD 537 is not just necessary, it is urgent. Without protections like this, we are leaving our most vulnerable community members open to harm. The generations that come after us deserve better. I ask you to do the right thing and vote in favor of this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

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Winthrop, Maine

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