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Testimony in Support of

LD537, An Act to Prohibit the Doxing of a Minor and to Authorize a Related Civil Action

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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Lexi Perry, and I am submitting this testimony in support of LD 537, An Act to Prohibit Doxing of a Minor and to Authorize a Related Civil Action.

Doxing is a serious public health and safety issue, in which personal information is disclosed online, violating an individual's privacy and often contributing to harassment, bullying, and threats of violence of the person being doxed. In the simplest of terms, doxing is a form of cyberbullying and poses real and near-immediate harm to the victim. These impacts can be especially damaging for minors, who are often very connected via social media. In some cases, doxing results in threats being made to the school, family, and home of the victim, creating unnecessary and avoidable stressors to the individual and community. This can result in feeling isolated or lonely, increased anxiety or depression, feelings of low self-esteem, disturbances in sleep and school performance, and other mental health concerns.

According to the 2023 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, 1 in 5 high school students reported having been cyberbullied at least once in the past 12 months. Often, this is peer-to-peer bullying; but as demonstrated in a few occurrences in Maine over the last month and year, there have been extreme instances of adults doxing minors. Doxing is never an acceptable approach to address differences in opinion, belief, or politics. Therefore, I urge this committee to pass LD 537 to protect Maine's youth. I thank Rep. Sachs and the multiple sponsors for their research and advocacy on this pressing issue.

Respectfully,

Lexi Perry