

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. I am writing in support of LD 537.

I am a business owner employing over 100 Mainers. I'm also a mentor to over 30 high school students and recent graduates. Most importantly, I am a father and an uncle to young children.

One of the reasons I have loved living in Maine is that it felt like a safe place to raise a family. That has felt much less true these last couple of weeks. While I once had a high degree of faith that Mainers were generally united by a common sense of decency, that faith has been shaken to its core.

Of all the duties that we have as adults, none is more sacred than to protect children—our kids, and our community's kids. It never would have occurred to me that a grown adult would do something so immature and malicious as posting photos and identifying information of a child online in an effort to put a target on that child's back for their own gain. But we've now seen that happen, and we have seen the very real and devastating impacts on that child, their family, their school, and their community.

If we can no longer trust adults to refrain from attacking children from behind their screens, then we must take steps to ban this practice and institute serious legal consequences. This should in no way be a partisan question--consequences should be equally severe for a liberal attacking a kid they disagree with as they are for a conservative attacking a kid they disagree with, or for instances of doxing with no political motive whatsoever. Doxing a child is criminal behavior, period.

Mainers are better than this, and those who are not should know that they are committing a crime and will face consequences. As a business owner, I do not want my employees to fear for the safety of their children while they are at work. As a mentor, I do not want my mentees to feel they need to shrink and hide from adults who should be supporting them and leading by example. And as a father, I want to be able to raise my child to never hide who they are or what they believe, and to feel that they can safely do that without being doxed by a cowardly adult and having their childhood destroyed and their life put at risk.

LD 537 will go a long way to making sure Maine is a place where the safety of our children is not in question. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ben Conniff  
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