

Testimony in Support LD 537: An Act to Prohibit Doxing of a Minor and to Authorize a Related Civil Action will have a public hearing

Patti Forster, Knox County Resident, Washington, Maine and Public School Teacher

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Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and esteemed members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

I have dedicated the past thirty-two years as a public school teacher with the past twelve teaching English at Camden Hills Regional High School. I also serve as the president of the Maine Council for English Language Arts and am a National Board Certified Teacher. Over the course of my career, I have been honored to receive several distinctions, including the 2020 Claudette & John Brassil Distinguished Educator Award, the 2021 Knox County Teacher of the Year, and recognition as a semifinalist for the 2022 Maine State Teacher of the Year. Throughout my career, I have worked to create safe, welcoming learning environments for ALL students, and today, I am here to express my strong support for LD 537: An Act to Prohibit Doxing of a Minor and to Authorize a Related Civil Action.

In an increasingly digital world, our students face unprecedented risks, including the malicious practice of doxing—the intentional public release of personal identifying information without consent, with the intent to harm. When minors become targets of doxing, the consequences can be devastating. Exposure of their personal information makes them vulnerable to harassment, stalking, and even physical harm. It can disrupt their education, damage their mental health, and place their families at risk.

LD 537 is a necessary step toward safeguarding Maine’s children from these dangers. By prohibiting the doxing of minors and providing a clear legal path for families to seek recourse, this legislation sends a powerful message that we prioritize the safety and well-being of our students. The bill recognizes the real threats that doxing poses and ensures that those responsible for harming minors through this practice are held accountable.

As educators, we encourage responsible digital citizenship, teaching students to engage with technology in ethical and productive ways. However, our efforts must be complemented by strong legal protections that deter harmful online behavior. LD 537 provides essential protections that will help create a safer environment for our students both in and out of the classroom.

I urge you to support this critical legislation and stand with Maine’s families and educators in protecting our children from the dangers of online harassment. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Patti Forster