

Holly Houston
Yarmouth
LD 117

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Yarmouth, Maine
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Senator Ingwersen, Representative Myer and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee Health and Human Services: Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee.

My name is Holly Houston, I'm a resident of Yarmouth, and I am writing on my own behalf. I am writing today in support of LD117.

I am a teacher and work with teenagers every day. This bill would support students in Maine by recognizing the presence and need for preventing and responding to sexual violence that exists in our schools. Being a teenager is hard. Being sexually harassed while in school makes it nearly impossible to learn as fully as possible. We owe it to our students, as well as to all people in Maine who are sexually harassed, to increase prevention and create a safer learning and living environment. Title IX of the 1972 Equal Education Opportunity Act reads "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." As women and girls, trans, and nonbinary people are disproportionately affected by sexual violence, they need greater protection so that their access to equal education is at the same level as men and boys.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD117. Thank you.