

Lina Mamut
New Vineyard, Maine
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to address the committee. My name is Lina Mamut. I am a resident of New Vineyard. I am a local business owner and technology professional. I am here in opposition of the bills before the committee today, and I will speak specifically in regard to LD-1002, which would require schools to refer to a student by the name and gender on their birth certificate, unless a parent gives written permission to use a different name and/or gender, or documents detailing a legal change are provided to a school.

I am a 34 year old nonbinary adult and my pronouns are they/them. I spent years dealing with mental health issues and suicide attempts due to dysphoria because of being assigned female at birth, and being unable to transition when I was younger. I have always known I am nonbinary, even before I had a working definition of "gender identity" or "assigned sex at birth". I know from personal experience how LD-1002 would hurt Maine schools, communities and children.

Schools should create a supportive environment where every student can receive an education and participate in activities. Scientific studies published in accredited, peer-reviewed publications such as Nature Human Behavior have proven that anti-transgender laws cause up to a 72% increase in suicide attempts among transgender and nonbinary youth. This bill, and the fact that it is in front of this committee, is quite literally risking the lives of young people across the state and country.

Cis-gender students have always had the opportunity to be called by a nickname. My own legal name is Polina, but I have been called Lina since I was born. Giving our children autonomy over their identity is vital for self-actualization, and to help Maine youth grow into strong members of our community. Only because of the recent politicalization of transgender people's identities by fringe groups has that autonomy come into question. Bills such as LD-1002 and others that are before the Judiciary Committee reinforce to the transgender and nonbinary youth of Maine that their core identity is not theirs to own and cherish, but can be questioned by anyone. This bill harms every child and person in the state of Maine, and should fail because of the irreparable harm it will do and is doing right now.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills. Thank you for the time.