

Finn Teach
Portland, Maine
May 2, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Finn Teach, and I live in Portland. **I am writing in opposition to LD 1002: *An Act to Protect Children's Identification by Requiring Public Schools to Use the Name and Gender Specified on a Child's Birth Certificate.***

As a transgender person, I know how powerful it is when someone calls you by your real name—the name that reflects who you are, not just who you were told to be. I also know how deeply painful it is to be misgendered, especially in front of others, and especially in a school setting where young people are already navigating some of the most vulnerable years of their lives. This bill would codify that kind of harm.

LD 1002 would force schools to refer to students only by the name and gender listed on their birth certificate unless a parent submits written permission or legal documentation. This may sound procedural, but in practice, it would increase harm, out trans and nonbinary students against their will, and create logistical barriers to safety and respect in the classroom.

Young people often come out gradually and cautiously. Schools should be a place where students can explore and express who they are with support and care. For some youth, getting parental permission isn't always safe or possible. For others, legal documents take time and resources that many families do not have. By requiring this kind of paperwork as a prerequisite for basic respect, this bill inserts the state into private, sensitive matters and exposes already vulnerable youth to greater risk.

According to GLSEN's 2021 National School Climate Survey, students who are called by their chosen name and pronouns at school report significantly lower rates of depression and suicidal ideation. This isn't about "special treatment"—it's about survival. Denying a student's identity by default isn't neutral; it's harmful.

This bill also places educators in an impossible position—forced to either disregard a student's expressed identity or violate a policy that punishes them for showing empathy and respect. Teachers and school staff already have too much on their plates. We should be empowering them to create inclusive classrooms, not policing how they speak to the students in their care.

In the face of real educational challenges—underfunded schools, mental health crises, staff shortages—LD 1002 does absolutely nothing to improve student outcomes. It offers no educational benefit and only serves to stigmatize and control. We should be passing laws that lift students up, not tie their dignity to paperwork.

I urge the committee to reject LD 1002 and stand for the rights, privacy, and humanity of all Maine students.

Thank you.

Finn Teach