

Thomas Earley
Newport
LD 233

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

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard by this committee. I am writing in opposition to a group of bills before this committee including: LD233, LD868, LD1002, LD1134, LD1704, LD1337, LD1432, LD380. As a Maine citizen, I view these bills as discriminatory and in violation of Maine's tradition of valuing all of its citizens.

I am a retired Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) with more than thirty five years of clinical practice. In all that time, I did not encounter a single case of someone being psychologically harmed by social or athletic contact with someone from the LGBTQ community. So, I would first challenge those advocating for these bills to "specify" the "harm" they believe this contact would cause. On the other hand, I have seen the elevated anxiety and depression, including suicidality, experienced by LGBTQ youth and young adults as a result of discriminatory language and behavior from members of the communities in which they reside. I do not believe the Maine legislature would want to codify this behavior and its consequences. These bills are simply unnecessary, without basis, and hold greater potential for harm than good.

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

Thank You