

Deanne Ochoa-Durrell
Portland, ME
LD 1002

Honorable members of the Judiciary Committee, I am writing this testimony in opposition to LD 1002. My name is Deanne Ochoa-Durrell and I am a resident of Portland, ME. As a social worker and a parent, I am well-versed in the research surrounding best practices in working with gender non-conforming youth and in interacting effectively with teens. There is significant research that indicates that one of the most important things that parents and schools can do to support the health and well-being of trans and non-binary youth is to use their preferred name and pronouns. It can quite literally save lives. Last year, 46% of transgender and non-binary youth in the United States contemplated suicide. Twelve percent of transgender and non-binary youth attempted suicide last year. Youth who have supportive school experiences (which absolutely includes those who use their preferred names and pronouns) report lower rates of attempting suicide. This bill would harm children in our public school system and serve no protective or positive purpose overall. This bill merely forces an additional and potentially onerous process on a young person before they can use their preferred name and pronouns. I strongly oppose this bill.