

Maggie Zall  
Portland  
LD 1002

Chairperson and members of the committee,

My name is Maggie Zall, and I am a lifelong resident of Portland. I am writing today in strong 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.

This bill proposes to require public schools to use the name and gender specified on a child's birth certificate, unless the parent provides written permission or documentation of a legal change of name or gender. While the intent may be to standardize records, the impact on transgender and nonbinary students is profoundly harmful.

For many transgender students, their birth certificate does not reflect their true identity. Forcing schools to use outdated and incorrect information can lead to significant distress, bullying, and exclusion. It invalidates their identity and sends a message that their authentic selves are not worthy of recognition. As a human services worker, I previously have provided mentorship and skill building to transgender youth, and I can assure you that no one would choose to face the difficulties they have.

Furthermore, this bill places an undue burden on parents and guardians. Obtaining a legal name or gender change can be a complex, costly, and emotionally taxing process. Requiring such documentation for every instance of identity recognition in a school setting is both impractical and discriminatory.

Maine has long been a leader in protecting the rights of all its residents, including transgender individuals. Enacting this bill would be a step backward, undermining the state's commitment to inclusivity and respect for all students.

I urge you to reject LD 1002. Our schools should be places where all students feel safe, valued, and seen for who they truly are. This bill threatens that principle and the well-being of transgender and nonbinary students across Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.