

Angela Gilbert
Lewiston, ME
May 8th, 2025

Members of the Judiciary Committee, I am writing to you as a Maine public school teacher of fifteen years. I appreciate your consideration of my testimony. I am writing to implore you to reject the harmful and dangerous bills that target the Trans community of Maine.

I urge you to reject LD 1002. As a teacher, I have had lots of students share identities and names and pronouns that differ from those given to them at birth. The rights of the students to be themselves and to choose who they trust with that information is under attack, and it is not right to force students to adhere to an identity that does not truly represent them while they are at school. If students find someone in their school whom they trust with who they truly are, how can we take that away from them? How can we say to children that they don't get to be their true selves in their school? Students being acknowledged by their true name and identity lowers their risk of suicide by a wide margin. This bill would remove an important safety net for trans students. Many would have no places where they could be themselves, and this is downright dangerous for them.

An outright ban of the existence of Trans people, which is exactly what these bills promote, protects nobody, and it hurts countless. It hurts me, as a cisgender, heteronormative woman, a teacher, because it massively prohibits my ability to perform my job, to keep my students safe, to help create a welcoming environment in my classroom, to run my school's Civil Rights Team and know that those protections serve every single of my students. How could we consider saying, "Everyone is protected, but not you." These bills tie my hands behind my back and force my Trans students to go into hiding. And my students deserve better than that. They deserve equal protection. They deserve to have it not ripped away from them by their government.

Thank you for your consideration.