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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Tasha Tarbox, and I reside in Lyman Maine with my husband and our two children. I am writing as a parent, educator, and advocate to urge you to protect the rights and safety of transgender youth in our state.

As the parent of a transgender teenager, I have witnessed firsthand the positive impact that an affirming school environment has had on my child's mental health and overall well-being. When my child is supported and accepted for who they are, they thrive academically and socially. However, the introduction of anti-trans legislation has instilled fear and uncertainty in our family. We worry about the potential loss of access to gender-affirming care and the possibility of discrimination in school activities.

Anti-trans legislation doesn't only harm transgender kids—it creates a dangerous climate for all children. Cisgender girls are increasingly being harassed, questioned, or even barred from competition if they do not conform to narrow standards of femininity. We have already seen cases where women have been forced to prove their gender in humiliating and invasive ways. This is not protection—it is policing.

Trans kids make up a tiny fraction of students—less than 0.02% of high school athletes nationwide—but face enormous risks. In 2023, nearly 1 in 5 transgender youth attempted suicide. In Maine, teen suicide rates are among the highest in the country.

My child is a resilient, kind, and brave human who only wants the chance to live a happy, healthy life—free from harassment or harm simply because of who they are. These proposed laws put children like mine at greater risk. I urge you to consider the real-life implications of such policies on families like mine and to prioritize the safety and inclusion of all students.

As an educator, I've witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of homelessness, food insecurity, and abuse on youth. These are the issues hurting our kids—not inclusion. Meanwhile, school shootings continue to rise. These are the real crises demanding our attention. Targeting transgender students does nothing to make schools safer.

Please choose compassion, facts, and real solutions. Protecting trans rights is protecting all kids. 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!

Sincerely,

Tasha Tarbox