

## **Testimony in Opposition to LD 868**

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Karen MacDonald, and I am writing to express my strong opposition to LD 868, a bill that would cause real harm to transgender students in our public schools.

This legislation discriminates against transgender youth in multiple areas of school life, from bathrooms and locker rooms to sports and broader school participation. It codifies exclusion in public education and sends a damaging message: that some students are less worthy of dignity, respect, and belonging than others.

The Maine Human Rights Act clearly prohibits discrimination based on gender identity in public accommodations—including schools. This bill violates those protections and threatens the rights and wellbeing of transgender students across the state.

Supporters claim this bill protects privacy and fairness. In reality, it does the opposite. It polices identity rather than protecting anyone, and it opens the door to invasive scrutiny and harassment. Transgender students already face disproportionate rates of bullying, depression, and even suicide. This bill would intensify that harm.

Schools in Maine already have policies in place that balance inclusion, privacy, and fairness. Educators are working hard to support all students, as I did for 37 years. This bill undermines that work by encouraging lawsuits against schools for affirming a student's identity. It creates a chilling effect that will discourage schools from doing what is right and lawful.

Public funds should never be used to enforce discrimination. Instead, we should invest in making our schools safe and welcoming for every student. ALL of them!

Please reject this harmful and unnecessary bill. Our students deserve better.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Karen MacDonald  
Westbrook, Maine

2014 Maine Teacher of the Year