

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee. My name is Beth Chiquoine and I am a resident of Harpswell. I am writing in opposition to the bills before the committee today.

I have two family members who have chosen to transition from their birth gender. One of them has completed his transition and has lived for several decades as a hardworking, loving, thoughtful, contributing member of society. My other relative is younger, and has more recently made the decision to transition. This relative is also a hardworking, loving member of society.

Having loved both of these people since their births, I have observed them as they realized that they did not feel comfortable in the gender of their birth. I have watched them as they started the mental, physical, and emotional journey needed to make this significant transition. The decision to transition is a personal one and requires bravery.

The Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Maine Human Rights Act would remove all references to "gender identity" as a protected class in the Maine Human Rights Act. Because discrimination against queer and trans people is technically discrimination on the basis of sex and/or sexual orientation, it is not immediately clear what effect removing "gender identity" would have on protections for trans Mainers. My relatives deserve the same civil rights and freedoms to be themselves as much as any other US citizen. I urge you not to pass these proposed bills that diminish the rights of transgender citizens.