

**Meghan Gardner**

Orono, Maine

May 8, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Meghan Gardner, and I live in Orono, Maine. I am a parent, an advocate, and someone who believes that human rights protections should move us forward, not drag us backward. I am writing to testify in strong opposition to LD 1432.

This bill would remove all references to gender identity from the Maine Human Rights Act. Supporters may argue that these protections are redundant, that gender identity is covered by other categories. But make no mistake: this bill is about erasure. It is an attempt to make transgender and non-binary Mainers invisible under the law.

As a parent, I cannot imagine telling my child that the state no longer recognizes some of her classmates as worthy of protection. What message does that send to trans students? That they do not count? That they are not deserving of safety at school, at work, in housing, or in public life? Even if other legal frameworks might still offer some protection, this bill sends a dangerous and chilling message: you are not welcome here.

Maine added gender identity to the Human Rights Act in 2005. It was the right thing to do then, and it remains the right thing now. Removing it now — in 2025 — is not about cleaning up the law. It is about using the law as a tool to signal rejection and rollback rights.

Trans Mainers are our neighbors, our coworkers, our classmates, and our family members. They deserve to be named in our laws, and they deserve to be safe.

I urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1432. Keep Maine's protections strong. Keep them clear. And keep them inclusive of all of us.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Meghan Gardner