

Chris Fletcher
Presque Isle
LD 1002

Let me be very clear: I strongly oppose LD 1002. I say as someone who believes deeply in the right of every human being—especially our young people—to be treated with dignity and respect.

Now, this bill—this so-called "Act to Protect Children's Identification"—doesn't protect children. What it does is force our public schools, under threat of state law, to ignore a student's affirmed name and gender identity and instead impose the name and gender assigned on a birth certificate. That is wrong. That is dehumanizing. That is state-sponsored bullying.

We are talking about young people who are already facing staggering levels of discrimination. Over 80% of transgender and nonbinary youth report feeling unsafe at school. Many of them struggle with depression and suicidal ideation—not because there's something wrong with them, but because of how society treats them. And now we want to pass a law in Maine that tells them: "We don't see you. We don't respect you. And we're going to call you by a name that isn't yours."

That is unacceptable.

This bill does not solve a single real problem. What it does is insert politicians into deeply personal conversations between students, their families, and the professionals who support them—teachers, counselors, doctors. It undermines the trust that young people need to feel safe at school. It disrespects the judgment of educators. And it flies in the face of medical science, basic decency, and the values of a free society.

If you care about children, you affirm who they are. If you care about mental health, you don't pass laws that push vulnerable kids further into the margins. And if you care about freedom, then you do not pass government mandates that tell people what names they can go by.

So I say to the Maine legislature: Let's do better. Let's protect kids—not from their identities, but from cruelty, from discrimination, and from policies like this one.

I urge you to vote no on LD 1002.

Thank you.