

Laura Grover  
Saco  
LD 1432

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for this hearing. My name is Laura Grover and I wanted to write to help you understand that the anti-trans bills up for discussion today are not just a matter of logistics for many of your constituents, but for me and my queer family, they are a matter of deep terror and authentic pain. I am the parent of a 9 year old trans child who uses they/them pronouns. They have been steadfast with this identity since they were 6 years old and as with all trans children and adults, this is not a passing phase nor is it a threat to our community; it is simply an authentic marker of self.

My child would not understand why anyone would want to erase them or why people would be afraid of them. They are kind, silly, creative and empathetic and they easily go out of their way to understand where others might be coming from. If someone says something hurtful, my child will not react with animosity and instead might ask, "I wonder what is going on with him?" This active curiosity that there is more to someone's harm than just desire to hurt is something I wish to bring forth to you today. My child and I beseech those here who feel fearful and reactive to what is different (such as those who use they/them pronouns or trans men and women) to instead ask themselves, "Where is this coming from?" We understand that perhaps you do not have a desire to hurt us and we ask you to hear us instead. We plead that you not cultivate your fears by creating legislation that harms safety for many, but instead work towards safety for all. We ask that you can engage with curiosity and openness to better understand your queer and trans neighbors and their desire just to be healthy and to exist. We ask that you engage directly with research on this topic; as, luckily, there is a lot of peer-reviewed research to look to and, in fact, none of that research supports the following bills. Trans people are not perpetrators of violence, but are most often victims of such. Trans athletes are just people and children who want to be part of a team; looking for the same things anyone does in most sports, working together towards a common goal and discovering connection and self esteem. Singling out trans people, denying their existence and excluding them leads to suicidal ideation for 81% of trans people, whereas 42% actually attempt suicide. These facts are staggering. We should be working together to support and uplift trans people, especially youth, with the same gentle understanding and curiosity that even my young trans child will offer immediately to others.

Please join me in opposing the following bills. I cannot express enough the fear many of us are living in every day and we need ambassadors for safety, not for separation. We are scared and we need your help. Please vote no on:

LD 233: An Act to Prohibit Biological Males from Participating in School Athletic Programs and Activities Designated for Females When State Funding Is Provided to the School

LD 868: An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools

LD 1002: An Act to Protect Children's Identification by Requiring Public Schools to Use the Name and Gender Specified on a Child's Birth Certificate

LD 1134: An Act to Prohibit Males from Participating in Female Sports or Using Female Facilities

LD 1704: An Act to Prohibit a School Administrative Unit from Adopting a Policy That Allows a Student to Use a Restroom Designated for Use by the Opposite Sex

LD 1337: An Act to Amend the Maine Human Rights Act Regarding Female Athletes and Safety in Women's Single-sex Shelters

LD 1432: An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Maine Human Rights Act

LD 380: An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Gender-affirming Health Care Services

Thank you for listening,

Laura