

Emma DayBranch
Albany
LD 1002

To: Judiciary Committee
From: Emma DayBranch
Date: May 8, 2025

RE: Testimony in opposition of L.D. 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”

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Emma DayBranch, and I am a resident of Albany, Maine, a health professional, and a proud member of this community. I write to urge you to oppose L.D. 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.”

This bill would force schools to disregard a student's affirmed name and gender unless parents provide written permission or legal documentation of a change. Such a policy would isolate and stigmatize transgender and nonbinary students, undermining their well-being and safety at school. It would also create unnecessary barriers for families, increase the risk of bullying, and make schools less inclusive and supportive for all students.

As a student in rural Maine, I had close friends who experienced bullying and hardship in school and at home due to stigma around gender and sexual identity. These harms are not only painful in the moment but have lasting health impacts – ie higher risk for depression, substance use, and chronic illnesses. For many of us, this is not anecdotal. These numbers speak to our own experiences and those of friends and family.

When home is not a safe place, bills like L.D. 1002 become even more dangerous for vulnerable students. Data from Maine show that transgender youth are far more likely to experience violence, threats, or rejection at home, with many reporting they wanted to leave home due to violence or the threat of violence. For these students, school may be the only place where they feel affirmed and safe to be themselves. Forcing schools to use only the name and gender on a birth certificate-regardless of a student's needs or safety-strips away this critical support, increases isolation, and puts youth at higher risk of mental health crises, homelessness, and harm.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to reject this legislation. Let us build schools that are safe and supportive for every student.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,

Emma DayBranch