

Wanda Stahl
Wells
LD 1704

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to the committee.

I am Rev. Dr. Wanda Stahl, a lifelong Mainer currently residing in Wells, ordained United Methodist Clergy and retired professor from Boston University School of Theology. I am writing in opposition to LD 1704.

I have worked with transgender colleagues, students, and parishioners for decades. I have been blessed and enriched by their stories and their presence in my life, and their contributions to the institutions I have served. Over these years, I have heard many heartbreaking stories of rejection, bullying, and other forms of violence and discrimination. I have also listened to students and colleagues who have been on the receiving end of such behaviors because they “looked” or “acted” like they were transgendered.

From my years serving as a professor in a theological school with a significant number of transgender persons, I know a supportive community is important for allowing people to thrive. A diverse community with equal access to opportunities for ALL students benefits everyone. This is true for public schools as well as private universities.

This bill is not only discriminatory, it removes from each school the decision making ability to make policies based on the best interest of their student body. I’m opposed to this bill for its singling out of a particular population of marginalized people, and wonder if this bill passes, which population of people will be singled out next based on biased views of what is deemed acceptable.

In addition, given the large number of economic, environmental, and health related issues facing our state, devoting this level of attention to attacking a small, marginalized population of people seems a poor use of time and energy.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective. I urge you to vote “Ought not to pass” on this bill.