

Alberto Morales
South Portland
LD 868

To the Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Alberto Morales, and I am educator from South Portland, Maine. I am writing to express my profound opposition to this bill.

Maine must stand up against the national political agenda interfering with our rights to make our own laws. This bill, and others like it, represent a dangerous overreach and an attempt to import discriminatory practices that have no place in our state.

Bills that discriminate against transgender students violate both state and federal constitutional guarantees of equal protection. Every student in Maine deserves to feel safe, respected, and supported in our schools. This legislation does the opposite; it singles out and targets an already vulnerable group of young people.

As a parent, I know that these bills would leave ALL girls vulnerable to scrutiny and harassment. When we start legislating who is "girl enough" to participate in school activities or use certain facilities, we open the door to invasive questioning and subjective judgments based on appearance or perceived gender nonconformity. These bans empower schools to engage in policing adherence to gender norms, which unfairly scrutinizes girls' bodies, and have been shown to affect girls of color even more. This is not the kind of environment we want for any of our children.

Furthermore, these bans will cause fear, distrust, and confusion for students, families, and educators. Schools should be places of learning and growth, not battlegrounds for divisive political agendas. This bill will force educators into the untenable position of enforcing discriminatory policies, diverting resources and attention from their core mission of educating all students. It will create an atmosphere of suspicion and anxiety, harming the entire school community.

Crucially, we must acknowledge the severe impact such legislation can have on the mental health and well-being of our youth. Young people hurt themselves when they are not accepted for who they are. When we tell transgender young people that they are not valid, that they do not belong, or that their identity is up for debate, we are causing direct and profound harm. The rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation are already tragically high among transgender youth, and bills like this only exacerbate their suffering by denying them acceptance and affirmation.

Maine has a proud tradition of fairness and inclusivity. This bill runs counter to those values. It is a solution in search of a problem, one that will cause significant harm to our students and our communities.

I urge you to reject this discriminatory legislation and instead focus on policies that protect all students and ensure that Maine remains a welcoming and equitable state for everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,