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LD 1432

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee. My name is Jessica Holland, I'm a resident of Portland, a children's librarian, and I am an out transgender woman. I am here today in opposition of the anti-trans bills before the committee on Thursday.

As a children's librarian, my days are filled with interactions with Maine families. Not once have I come across a family who considered the issues raised by these bills to be those that need legal actions. In a time when we are all worried for the economy and our own rights has anyone raised transgender people to be a serious concern in their lives.

At the same time, I also volunteer for Maine Trans Net, and in a recent event to discuss the legal threats arranged against us, one transgender teenager there shouted out a simple three-word plea: "Please protect us!" It was heartbreaking to hear the raw fear in such a young person's voice, to know that they needed to beg others for their safety, and to feel that very same fear for them and myself alike.

As you may know, the rate of both the threat of violence and the harm of suicide is vastly elevated for transgender people in this country. Legal protections and an accepting society have been shown to drop that rate down to match that of the general populace, so it is not hyperbole when I tell you that the decision you make can save or cost the lives of some of the most vulnerable mainers in your constituency.

On behalf of the thousands of transgender mainers I repeat this same plea. Whatever reprieve you might hope to get from the current administration for removing our rights will be fleeting at best, and in no way worth the cost. Please do the right thing.

Please protect us.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills.

Thank you!
Jessica Holland