

Amy Tague  
Portland, Maine  
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Amy Tague, a resident of Portland, and I'm here on behalf of HopeGateWay, a community of faith in Portland, Maine. The words of Micah 6:8 inspire our mission: to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God. I am writing to vehemently oppose LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, LD 1337, LD 1432, and LD 380. As a person of faith, parent, and social worker, I write to you with deep concern about these bills that seek to restrict access to sports teams, public restrooms, health care, and legal protections against discrimination based on gender identity.

My faith tells me we must protect the most vulnerable among us. Throughout his ministry, Jesus consistently stood with those whom religious and political authority marginalized, misunderstood, and mistreated. Right now, trans youth are one of the most vulnerable communities within this state and the country. These bills are incredibly harmful because they further marginalize an already marginalized group of students and adults who have the same right to a safe, supportive environment as their peers. To deny them the right to participate in their daily life based on who they are is unjust, unfair, and anti-Christian. And, frankly, it's not how we do things in Maine.

As someone with a personal connection to other states that have banned gender-affirming care and access to sports teams and public restrooms, I am, sadly, aware of the harmful impact of these bills. They upend the lives of adolescents, exploring different values, beliefs, and interests to form a sense of who they are and what they want in life. Here in Maine, we share a deep understanding of community and care for our neighbors, regardless of our differences in life experiences. We organize meal trains, community fundraisers, barter goods for services, swap produce, and trade gardening tips. Alongside our neighbors, we cheer for and encourage our student-athletes.

I implore you to stop these harmful bills from moving forward. As a person of faith and resident of Maine, I'm asking that you choose inclusion over exclusion and justice over discrimination. Let us be a kind community where all children-transgender children included- are seen, safe, and celebrated.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective.