

Milja Brecher-DeMuro
Bar Harbor
LD 1704

Milja Brecher-DeMuro, LCSW
Bar Harbor, ME
May 8, 2025

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

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Milja Brecher-DeMuro, I am a licensed Clinical Social Worker with over 20 years' experience supporting the mental health of Mainers.

I am writing to express my opposition of the bills before the committee today.

The bills presented before you today are rooted in unfounded fear and will lead to discrimination and have significant impact on the mental health and well-being of all children.

Every day I witness the recovery and thriving of people who are given the safe space to be themselves, have access to resources and support and have opportunities to belong. Every day I work with people who have suffered greatly from experiences of discrimination, bullying, racism, fatphobia, homophobia and ableism and now are suffering with the long-term impacts. As laws have come in to protect Trans and non-binary youth, laws that state that all children can have access to resources and opportunities without discrimination, all children have become more safe and free. Isn't freedom and the pursuit of happiness and dignity and justice for all what America is about?

The more laws we have around gender segregation and gender scrutiny, the more children will experience repetitive and intentional efforts designed to undermine and invalidate their identities. All children's identities. When children do not feel safe and seen, are bullied, and scrutinized for their identity and self-expression, depression, anxiety, and risk for self-harm and suicidality double. Isn't that contrary to our goal for children to feel safer and have more opportunity?

True evolution and progress include increased celebration of diversity and opportunities for inclusion. The more open and expansive we can be with our children rooted in who they are, without us telling them who they should be, the more free, creative, innovative, compassionate, healthy and ultimately thriving citizens they will be. Passing bills that create more segregation, and exclusion is not keeping our kids more safe. In fact, it is doing the exact opposite.

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!"

Sincerely,
Milja Brecher-DeMuro, LCSW
Bar Harbor, ME