

Tyler Rukstales
Waterville
LD 1002

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Tyler Rukstales and I am a constituent of Waterville. I am writing this testimony on behalf of my transgender peers and the community as a whole. I am testifying against LD1002. This proposed legislation is not only unnecessary, but can also put young children within harms way both at school and at home. Unfortunately, in Maine not every child is blessed with a safe home environment where they can freely express themselves and feel comfortable with their parents or guardians. Oftentimes, young transgender teenagers are in situations where the adults in their lives are abusive, and cannot freely express themselves around the adults in their lives. Therefore, abused children oftentimes use their school hours to feel safe and comfortable, and to take away their ability to express themselves through their name takes away a feeling of freedom that is fleeting for children in precarious home situations. Not only that, but this can expose the child to bullying through transphobic classmates or even staff, and some teachers may even notify potentially abusive parents to the situation, which can put young children at risk. Not to mention, if this legislation were put into place, children with preferred nicknames would not be allowed to express themselves in class, transgender or not. The children of Maine deserve the right to their own autonomy and expression, do not take away identity from our children. Please, stop focusing so much on children who are expressing themselves through their, and focus more on their safety while within a school environment. My concerns and the concerns of many people in this fine state are much more geared towards shooters and bullying than a couple of kids who want to experiment with who they are, as is their right. Do your jobs, and protect the children of our state properly. Leave our trans kids alone.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I urge you to vote "Ought not to pass" on LD1002