

Mackenzie Morris
Rockland
LD 233

Mack (Mackenzie) Morris
Rockland
May 7, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts with the Committee. My name is Mack Morris, and I am a resident of Rockland.

I am writing to you in strong opposition of the bills before the committee on Thursday May 8th, 2025. Attempts to police gender at any age only serve to harm individuals and communities.

Having grown up in the 90s, I am so grateful for the societal shifts that have built awareness and compassion for queer and trans folks over the past few decades, especially in Maine. I experienced childhood during an era when cruelty based on gender and body norms was entirely commonplace, and it never made sense to me. Among other things, there was little to no mention or visibility of transness in the places I lived. As a non-binary adult, I found an affirming home in Queer community and developed deep relationships with other trans people that changed my life for the better. Witnessing our country backslide into antiquated and discriminatory practices across the board, the urgency to protect our rights and safety in our home state is stronger than ever.

The stated goals behind many of these misguided efforts are to protect cis women and girls from gendered violence, to make sports more fair for cisgender girls, to grant parents more agency in their children's lives.

What about protecting trans people? What about cis girls and boys who get mistaken for boys and girls? What about the agency of young people, especially those with unsupportive or abusive parents? What about the safety and dignity of unhoused transwomen? What about protecting all children from the disturbing requirement to "prove" their gender?

We are risking literal lives with the implementation of these laws. A peer-reviewed study by researchers at The Trevor Project, published in September of 2024, found that "anti-transgender laws significantly increased incidents of suicide attempts among trans and non-binary youth by as much as 72%." A February 2025 study from UCLA shows no evidence of safety risks associated with trans people using the bathroom aligned with their identity. However, it does report widespread harassment and violence toward trans people accessing bathrooms in general, including increased risks when trans folks are required to use bathrooms according to their sex assigned at birth.

Personally, I don't need a study to tell me what I've seen with my own eyes. The bills being put forth will undoubtedly cause harm and likely even deaths in our community. Implementing policies like these in our schools will instill fear and confusion while encouraging students to police each other's bodies. Instead we should be working to decrease bullying and violence of all kinds in our schools, in our shelters, in our state.

Keeping our community safe means keeping trans people safe, especially those most vulnerable. Keeping our students safe means teaching them to treat each other with compassion. Trans and genderqueer people will always be here. The question is whether we are allowed the same comforts, joys, and security as those who conform to specific ideas of gender and appearance.

Thank you for hearing my perspective. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on bills LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, LD 1337, LD 1432, & LD 380.