

Rebecca Tapley
Penobscot
LD 1704

May 8, 2025

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Rebecca Tapley. I've been an educator for over 20 years, and had the honor of serving as the 2016 Hancock County Teacher of the Year and 2017 Maine Teacher of the Year Finalist. I am writing today to testify in opposition to the following bills: LD 233, LD 380, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1337, LD 1432, and LD 1704

All of these bills are alarmingly discriminatory and anti-trans. As an educator, I strongly oppose how these bills undermine student inclusion and well-being. It is well-documented that transgender youth face high rates of bullying (Sares-Jäske L., et al, 2023). A recent study showed that anti-transgender laws cause up to a 72% increase in suicide attempts among transgender and nonbinary youth (Lee, 2024). The bills before you today are not inconsequential. They could be a matter of life and death for many Maine youth.

Whether it is through engagement in sports, hearing their correct name/pronoun, or in having a place to use the restroom, transgender youth must feel safe and supported in their school communities. Educators work hard every day to create self-affirming classrooms. These bills dramatically undo the hard work that is being done and will undoubtedly cause harm if enacted.

In addition, these bills violate the Maine Human Rights Act, which protects transgender students from discrimination in education and school programs and ensures equal access to public education and facilities. Title IX and the Maine Human Rights Act exist to protect all women, including transgender women and girls.

The children of Maine will be watching how adults choose to act. I believe this committee will see that the example to set for our youth is one of inclusion and acceptance, and continuing to stand by the Maine Human Rights Act and support our transgender youth.

I urge you to reject LD 233, LD 380, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1337, LD 1432, and LD 1704 and affirm your commitment to supporting all Maine students and individuals, regardless of gender identity.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Tapley
Penobscot, Maine

Lee WY, J NH, Hobaica S, et al (2024) State-level anti-transgender laws increase past-year suicide attempts among transgender and non-binary young people in the USA. *Nature Human Behaviour* 8:2096–2106.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-024-01979-5>

Sares-Jäske L, Czimbalmos M, Majlander S, Siukola R, Klemetti R, Luopa P, Lehtonen J. Gendered Differences in Experiences of Bullying and Mental Health Among Transgender and Cisgender Youth. *J Youth Adolesc.* 2023 Aug;52(8):1531-1548. doi: 10.1007/s10964-023-01786-7.