

Jacqueline Kutvirt
Brunswick
LD 1337

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Brunswick, Maine
May 8, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Jacqueline Kutvirt, I'm a resident of Brunswick, and I am also a public school educator. I am writing today in opposition of the bills before the committee today.

I am a public school teacher here in Maine. It is my understanding that LD1432 would remove all references to "gender identity" as a protected class in the Maine Human Rights Act. Removing this protection seems, to me, like a clear removal of rights that we have, as a state, fought hard for and stood by for years since 2005 when The Maine Human Rights Act (MHRA) adopted protections for gender identity.

In our school, we rely on the protections and anti-discrimination law in the MHRA. This Act is huge in terms of protecting our students against Bullying and Harassment, which is a deeply important and serious issue that we manage in our schools. Schools are responsible for creating a safe and inclusive environment for all students, including implementing policies and procedures to prevent and address bullying and harassment. So, if this bill removes "gender identity" as a protected category, I wonder what would happen in our schools? Would we then say that it's ok for one student to harass another student on the basis of their gender identity? What message are we sending to our kids if we remove these rights?! What will be removed next? Imagine, if next there's a bill that is titled "An Act to Remove Consideration of Race from the Maine Human Rights Act". Would we then remove hard earned rights for people of color in Maine? Where will we draw the line?

In addition, LD 1337 will make it harder for trans women to access shelters. This is not an issue that directly impacts our schools, but trans women in Maine already face serious barriers to accessing appropriate shelter and face disproportionate risks of violence, especially when they are unhoused. Shelters do the work to keep people safe, they know what they are doing and they have been doing it for years with very limited resources. I urge you to let them continue to do that work.

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, again.

Jacqueline Kutvirt
Brunswick, Maine