

Karen Wyman
Hallowell
LD 1002

Testimony of Karen Wyman of Hallowell, Maine
May 8, 2025

In Opposition to LD 1002: An Act to Protect Children's Identification by Requiring Public Schools to Use the Name and Gender Specified on a Child's Birth Certificate

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Karen Wyman, and I'm a resident of Hallowell. Thank you for considering my testimony in strong opposition to LD 1002 which would require schools to refer to a student by the name and gender on their birth certificate, unless a parent gives written permission to use a different name and/or gender, or documents detailing a legal change are provided to a school.

When I was in 6th grade at Great Salt Bay School in Damariscotta, I wanted to be called something other than my name. I was curious and trying to sort out who I was and wanted to be. Friends of mine go by their initials, or nicknames, or middle names. Sometimes how we want to be known changes, and it doesn't - and it shouldn't - always require a legal change to honor that desire.

For some children, the use of a different name and/or a different set of pronouns can be life-saving. Surely, that's an investment that is worth making. Maybe the name will stick; maybe it won't. But I sure want young people to find out for themselves. Children are exploring so many things, including who they are and who they might become. Schools should support that exploration in all reasonable and safe ways; calling a child by the name they most prefer and the pronouns that suit them are certainly reasonable and safe ways to support a child's growth and learning.

Please support the autonomy and selfhood of Maine youth by voting against LD 1002.

Sincerely,
Karen Wyman