

## Testimony Opposing LD 1704

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

My name is Helen Cohen. As a lifelong Mainer, I oppose LD 1704 in the strongest terms. This bill seeks to undo protections affirmed by our own state's highest court. In *Doe v. RSU 26*, the Maine Supreme Court ruled that a transgender girl had the right to use the girls' restroom. This bill seeks to roll that back and force students into unsafe, stigmatizing situations. There is no evidence that allowing trans students to use appropriate facilities increases risk to others. The only documented harms are to trans students themselves when they are denied access.

Bathrooms are not battlegrounds. This bill claims to protect privacy, but privacy and inclusion are not in conflict. Maine schools can and do provide private changing spaces. No child should fear harassment just for needing basic facilities. This bill is government overreach, inserting the legislature into local decisions and attempting to override the Maine Supreme Court's clear protection of trans students' rights.

Thank you for letting me share my perspective with the Committee. If a bill singles out and excludes a group of children from basic school life, it doesn't matter how it's framed, it is discriminatory. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on this bill.

Sincerely,

Helen Cohen