

Cameron Prophet
Brunswick, Maine
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinion here as a Maine resident. My name is Cameron Prophet but everyone calls me Prophet. I am a member of MSEA-SEIU Local 1989 and the Brunswick Renter's Organization. I stand in firm opposition to LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, LD 1337, LD 1432, and LD 380. I believe they are an infringement on the rights of every Mainer, whether transgender or cisgender.

I will begin by addressing the bills targeting transgender youth in schools. Bills that require schools to receive permission to call students what they prefer to be called negatively impact not only transgender students but also any student who uses a nickname. It also adds unnecessary and unrealistic work to school staff who are already overworked and underpaid. Additionally, any bill that allows for or necessitates investigation into speculation made about a child's biological sex could be used to target any student for any reason by coaches, school staff, other students, sports spectators, or community members. These kinds of bills are restrictions on everyone's freedom and can be used to further marginalize any vulnerable youth or adults we have living in our state.

The Maine state constitution bans discrimination on the basis of sex, and many of these bills would necessitate sex based discrimination for both transgender and cisgender individuals across the state. Any bill that allows for action to be taken against an individual based on speculation of their assigned sex at birth is a violation of their rights and personal privacy, especially if that process for action includes any form of sex confirmation. Putting laws into place that strip people of their right to decide who has access to their personal medical information, their birth certificate or even access to their physical body is something I hoped I'd never have to testify against in my lifetime. The laws proposed would invite speculation against any adult or child in this state who does not fit the "expected presentation" of their gender or sex and would strip them of their right to privacy. Regardless of transgender status.

People who are transgender have every legal right to live the same full and happy life as anyone else according to the state and federal constitutions. According to a study done by UCLA's Williams Institute a staggering 81% of transgender adults have considered suicide in their lifetimes. This statistic is not because we don't want to live, or because we don't want to be who we are. According to a study published by Duke University press, when they studied all-cause mortality rates using information from private insurers from 2011-2019 and "Overall, we found that trans people were nearly twice as likely to die over the period as their non-trans counterparts". The laws being proposed today target an already vulnerable population with unconstitutional discrimination and would continue to contribute to the disproportionate loss of life that my transgender community faces every day.

We all deserve to live with the liberty and justice that is gifted to us by this country's pledge of allegiance. I ask you to vote to uphold our state government's commitment to that pledge. I thank you for the time you've taken to listen to me today and I hope that this information, and my humanity may urge you to vote against these bills.