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Portland, Maine  
LD 1337

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Marika Marland and I am a resident of Portland Maine. I have been a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner working in Maine for 17 years. I am in opposition of the bills before the committee today.

I have worked with transgender women who are unhoused and require shelter services for many years. I am concerned as a health care provider regarding bill LD 1432 as many transgender women find themselves unhoused. Transgender folks face a high degree of workplace discrimination and thus find themselves unemployed and are at risk of being unhoused. In fact 1 in 4 transgender folks have lost their jobs due to bias and more than 75% have experienced workplace discrimination (according to the National Center for Transgender Equity, 2021) Transgender people are also twice as likely as cisgender people to be unemployed. I have never heard of any ciswomen feeling unsafe in a shelter with transwomen and I have worked in community mental health for many years. This bill should fail because it is trying to solve a problem that is not there, unhoused transgender and cis women women have been safely cohabitating in shelters for many years and there is no issue with them living together.

If this bill passed it would put transgender women in a position where they were more vulnerable to discrimination. Transgender people are over four times more likely than cisgender people to experience violent victimization, including rape, sexual assault, and aggravated or simple assault, according to a new study by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law analyzing data from 2017 to 2018. Furthermore, transgender folks who are unhoused are more vulnerable to violence. Why would the committee vote on a bill that would put Maine people at higher risk of being victims of violent crimes?

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote “Ought not to Pass” on LD 1432. Thank you.