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

Thank you kindly for the opportunity to address this Committee by letter. My name is Mindy Dean, I'm a resident of Marshfield, and I am writing on behalf of the queer community as a parent and teacher.

I am writing today in opposition of the bills before the committee today. Transgender students will be at further risk of discrimination and harassment if these bills pass. Imagine the transgender male student entering high school, hoping to be accepted as male, not wanting others to know they were born female, and not being allowed to enter the boys bathroom to use the toilet. I have had one such student in my classroom for the past three years. He entered high school as transmale. He has never wavered in his identity as transmale. He is not trans for convenience of sports competition or desire to enter a toilet of the opposite sex. Transgender students are not inherently sexual aggressors. Transgender students do not pretend to be trans simply to go into a bathroom of the opposite sex one day, and then switch gender identity the next day. Gender identity is a complex and painful journey for a student to go through. It is hard enough to be transgender, and harder still to watch the world around you pass judgement for something so personal. Transgender students are somebody's child. I have my own transgender child whom I love and watched go through the painful process of coming out, transitioning and finding peace as a transfemale in a community where she felt unsafe to do so. She worries about going to the bathroom in public; she worries if it will be safe for her to walk down a city street; she worries about what the future holds for her – but she has not wavered in her identity as transfemale once she realized that was the identity with which she belonged.

According to the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey results of 2023, one in four teenagers identify as queer or questioning while only one in twenty-five high schoolers identify as transgender. This is a very small percentage of the whole, but in a school of 400 students, we are now talking about 16 students – sixteen students that will face increased harassment, discrimination, scrutiny, and uncertainty if these bills pass.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills. Please do not remove the civil rights of our transgender youth. Thank you!