

Jessica Damico
BELFAST
LD 1337

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Belfast, ME

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

Thank you, chairs and members of the committee.

I'm here to speak in strong opposition to LD 1337, LD 1432, and LD 380 — three bills that, in different ways, seek to take away rights, dignity, and access to safety or healthcare from transgender people in Maine.

Let's start with LD 1337, which would allow private shelters to legally turn away transgender women — even those fleeing violence — simply because they are trans. The idea that trans women pose an inherent threat in shelters is not only unfounded, it's dangerous. Transgender women are far more likely to be victims of violence, not perpetrators. According to the 2022 U.S. Trans Survey, nearly 30% of trans people who stayed in a shelter were harassed, attacked, or sexually assaulted there — not because they were a threat, but because they were seen as one. This bill doesn't protect safety — it compromises it.

LD 1432 goes a step further. It proposes removing “gender identity” as a protected class from the Maine Human Rights Act — a move that would tell every transgender Mainer that their right to live free from discrimination is up for debate. And while some argue that protections based on “sex” or “sexual orientation” might still cover trans people, that's legally risky and morally wrong. The whole point of civil rights law is to name the people most often excluded, and ensure they are not left vulnerable to interpretation. We don't erase protections for groups just because they might be covered elsewhere. Trans people deserve to be named and protected — clearly and explicitly.

Then there's LD 380, which would take away the ability of 16- and 17-year-olds to consent to gender-affirming care unless their parents approve. But here's the reality: some of these teens live in unsupportive or abusive households. Some have parents who refuse to acknowledge their identity at all. We don't require parental consent for other forms of medical care for minors in this age group — including mental health treatment, STI testing, or even birth control. Why are we singling out this care, this group of kids?

These bills aren't about fairness, safety, or parental rights. They're about fear, control, and the erasure of trans people from public life. I urge you to reject these efforts to turn back the clock on human rights in Maine.

Thank you,
Jessica D'Amico