

May 8, 2025

Re: Bills LD 233, 868, 1002, 1134, 1704, 1337, 1432, 380

My name is Dr. Sandra Caron, and I live in Orono, Maine. I am Professor Emerita of Family Relations and Human Sexuality at the University of Maine and a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor.

As a professor, I have spent decades teaching thousands of college students about gender identity and transgender issues. As a counselor, I have worked with those who are struggling with their gender identity and with parents who seek to understand and embrace their trans children.

As I read the bills being considered today, it is clear that we need much more education, understanding, and compassion.

I am in opposition to these bills because I believe we must protect the most vulnerable among us. These bills do not do that. They do the opposite by threatening their safety and well-being.

The result of passing these bills is to make trans youth feel unwelcome and unsafe in our state.

It's important to recognize that, until recently, most Mainers paid little attention to the lives of transgender people, that is, until our current administration in Washington, DC felt justified in targeting them. I see no justification for the excessive time and energy that large groups of Mainers are dedicating to intruding on the lives of a small fraction of individuals in our community whom they do not know, have never met, and do not understand.

The ongoing attacks on transgender individuals resemble Hitler's persecution of Jews. There is no doubt that these bills marginalize an already marginalized group.

It needs to stop.

We are frightening the young people who most need our support. Mainers must rise above, step back, and recognize the harm we are causing by introducing these anti-trans bills.

Maine's trans youth face negative impacts due to the introduction of such bills. These bills promote bullying and harassment, and they lead to poor mental health outcomes for trans people.

None of these bills being considered today are about supporting trans youth or helping families accept and support their trans children.

By introducing these bills, we are sending harmful messages not only to transgender youth but also to their peers and other members of the community. We are implying that a transgender person is not the same as every other Mainer, suggesting that they are somehow "less than" or less deserving of love, acceptance, and equal opportunity.

Maine needs to do better.

No one wants to feel that their very existence is subject to the vote of others. We must stop harming our children by enacting legislation that targets them. These bills aren't necessary and help no one.

Transgender children just want to be themselves and enjoy their childhood. Families with trans kids want to feel secure knowing that Maine is a safe place to raise their children. Let's be that place.

I urge our legislators to protect all youth and families, including trans youth, by voting "Ought not to Pass" on these bills. Thank you.