

Allison Brzezinski
Camden
LD 1002

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee. My name is Allison Brzezinski (they/them), a trans/non-binary resident of Camden, Maine and I am here on behalf of my community. I am writing to share my opposition to all of the proposed bills that are intended to roll back protections for trans individuals.

Trans and gender expansive students should have the right to have their chosen names and pronouns used and respected in educational settings. I have met many trans youth who have spent time and energy finding a name that represents who they truly are. This beautiful practice should be honored by school administrations. A name is an important element to one's identity and we should all have the opportunity to be referred to the way that we wish. Ruling in favor of this bill would have a deep impact on ALL students, trans and cis alike. Every human being deserves the respect and dignity of being called by a name that represents them and by prohibiting students from being referred to by their chosen name, elements of their humanity are being stripped away.

I have a dear cis friend who recently changed her name to separate from the past traumas of assault and neglect from abusive partners she has experienced. It is an opportunity to reinvent herself. Her new name aligns with who she is and who she aspires to be. No one, at any age and in any setting, should be restricted from such a simple but meaningful act. Especially not at school, a place where youth must feel safe to express themselves in order to grow, learn and make discoveries about who they can be to make a positive impact on their communities and the larger world.

This bill should not be allowed to pass. It diminishes human dignity from youth who are simply trying to express themselves and use a name that better aligns with their identity. The bill would have a devastating impact on the mental health of our young people. It is a quantifiable, proven fact that anti-trans legislation, such as this, has led to up to a 72% increase in suicide attempts amongst trans youth. If passed, this legislation would likely lead to an increase in this already daunting number for self harm and attempted suicide.

Nothing good can come from this legislation being passed in a trans refuge state at a time when anti-trans legislation is spreading at an exceedingly dangerous rate. Maine has been and should remain a state where trans individuals of all ages and backgrounds feel protected. Passing this legislation would be a regression for the state as it would no longer be protecting some of our most vulnerable community members. As a 36 year old trans/non-binary person, I have felt relatively safe knowing what protections have been made into law for my community.

If this legislation passes, my day to day life as a trans person will change dramatically as it will lead to further bigotry and vitriol towards the trans community. I shudder to think about the ripple effect this reversal in trans protections will mean for trans people of all ages.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills as they will have a devastating impact for trans and cis students, youth and adults. Thank you!