

Gray Baldwin
Damariscotta
LD 868

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Senator Carney and Representative Kuhn and distinguished members of the Maine Judiciary Committee, my name is Gray Baldwin. I live in Damariscotta, Maine. I am a therapist of over 30 years of experience as well as a professor.

I am here to testify against LD 868 An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools - Rep. Elizabeth Caruso of Caratunk.

I understand that many folks feel they are protecting children, teens, and adults by instituting laws like this. However, it could not be further from the truth. This practice is discriminatory and harmful to all students.

First, any student that does not fit the prescribed gender role norm, who maybe is tall or short for their age, not stereotypically pretty or masculine, or dresses in a way that is ambiguous would be subject to policing of the bathroom that they use. This includes children who are not transgender who may not appear as the stereotypical male or female. In addition, what about students who are intersex, a naturally occurring variation in human biology where people's sex characteristics do not fit the typical definition of male or female? Intersex people are as prevalent as redheads so there are many intersex students in our community.

Next, bathrooms are places where people need privacy. Policing bathroom access creates atmospheres of surveillance and fear that violate the need for privacy. In addition, there is no evidence that students of any gender are in danger if transgender students use the restroom that matches their gender identity.

This practice of policing is impractical and uses much needed staff time policing who uses what bathroom rather than focusing on the education of our children. In addition, what is the criteria that school staff will use to determine who can use what bathroom? Will people have to prove their gender by physical examination? If so, who is trained at our schools to do such examinations? Examinations like this are dehumanizing, traumatizing, and opportunities for predators to abuse children. Our schools do not need to be spending money or time on this practice of policing bathrooms.

I respectfully urge you to not vote discrimination into our state's laws.
Thank you for your time.