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Old Town, ME
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Testimony Opposing LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, LD 1337, LD 1432, and LD 380

Dear Honorable Members of the Maine Legislature,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Tamra Benson, and I am a resident of Old Town, Maine. I write today in strong opposition to a series of proposed bills that target the rights, dignity, and well-being of transgender and non-binary people in Maine. These bills—LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, LD 1337, LD 1432, and LD 380—not only threaten to roll back established civil rights but also risk real harm to some of Maine’s most vulnerable residents: transgender youth and adults.

Transgender people have existed throughout all of human history, and will always exist. They are a vital and vibrant part of the human family. Trans people bring unique perspectives to art, science, activism, and community care—enriching every aspect of society with resilience, creativity, and compassion. In embracing their truths, they challenge rigid norms and expand our collective understanding of gender, freedom, and identity. This isn’t just liberating for trans individuals—it’s liberating for everyone. Their existence challenges us to be braver and makes us all more human. The world is more just, more compassionate, and more beautiful because trans people are in it. Their presence doesn’t just matter—it uplifts and transforms us all.

LD 233: An Act to Prohibit Biological Males from Participating in School Athletic Programs and Activities Designated for Females When State Funding Is Provided to the School: This bill would exclude transgender girls from participating in school sports, a policy that conflicts with the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in [*Bostock v. Clayton County \(2020\)*](#), which confirmed that discrimination based on transgender status is unlawful sex discrimination. Transgender students deserve the same opportunities as their peers. Research from The [*Trevor Project*](#) shows that inclusive sports policies help reduce suicide risk and improve mental health outcomes for trans youth.

LD 868: An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools: This bill goes beyond athletics to deny transgender and non-binary students access to bathrooms, locker rooms, and housing aligned with their gender identity. Such policies have been deemed unlawful under Maine law, specifically in [*Doe v. Regional School Unit 26 \(2014\)*](#), where the Maine Supreme Judicial Court ruled that barring a trans girl from using the girl’s bathroom violated the Maine

Human Rights Act. Denying students access to appropriate facilities increases bullying, absenteeism, and psychological distress.

LD 1002: An Act to Protect Children's Identification by Requiring Public Schools to Use the Name and Gender Specified on a Child's Birth Certificate: This bill would require schools to misgender and dead-name students unless they navigate complex legal processes. This is more than bureaucratic—it's dangerous. A study published in [Pediatrics \(2018\)](#) found that using a transgender youth's chosen name in multiple settings was associated with a 71% reduction in suicidal behavior. Respecting a young person's identity is not only humane, it's lifesaving.

LD 1134: An Act to Prohibit Males from Participating in Female Sports or Using Female Facilities: This vague and sweeping bill misgenders transgender girls and could be used to broadly deny them access to school facilities. It contradicts both [Doe v. Regional School Unit 26](#) and federal civil rights law, while also increasing stigma, isolation, and health risks for transgender students. Discriminatory laws like this one undermine trust in public institutions and invite legal challenges.

LD 1704: An Act to Prohibit a School Administrative Unit from Adopting a Policy That Allows a Student to Use a Restroom Designated for Use by the Opposite Sex: This “bathroom ban” is a direct attack on the autonomy and safety of transgender students. Again, [Doe v. Regional School Unit 26](#) makes clear that denying access to appropriate bathrooms is discrimination under Maine law. Trans students who cannot safely use school bathrooms often skip school or suffer significant emotional harm. We should be protecting students, not punishing them for who they are.

LD 1337: An Act to Amend the Maine Human Rights Act Regarding Female Athletes and Safety in Women's Single-sex Shelters: This bill would permit discrimination against transgender women in shelters—spaces that should be centered on compassion and safety. Removing civil rights protections under the guise of “safety” does not make anyone safer. The [National Center for Transgender Equality](#) has documented that denying shelter access to trans women leaves many without safe options, compounding trauma and increasing the risk of violence.

LD 1432: An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Maine Human Rights Act: This bill seeks to erase gender identity as a protected class, leaving trans people more vulnerable to discrimination in housing, employment, education, and healthcare. While federal law under [Bostock v. Clayton County](#) offers some protections, Maine's own Human Rights Act is crucial for clear, local enforcement. Removing these protections is not just symbolic—it opens the door to increased harm.

LD 380: An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Gender-affirming Health Care

Services: This bill would strip away access to gender-affirming care for youth aged 16–18 unless they obtain parental consent. Every major medical association, including the [*American Academy of Pediatrics*](#) and [*American Medical Association*](#), affirms that gender-affirming care can be critical and life-saving for transgender youth. For many, requiring parental consent may mean being cut off from medically necessary care. This bill places ideology above science and endangers young lives.

Conclusion: Each of these bills targets transgender people—especially youth—with exclusion, erasure, and harm. They stand in opposition to established legal precedents, medical consensus, and basic principles of human dignity. Rather than protecting students or improving fairness, they stigmatize and endanger our neighbors.

I urge this Legislature to reject all of these discriminatory proposals and instead affirm Maine’s longstanding commitment to equality, safety, and justice for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Tamra Benson
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