

Ailish Kress
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LD 1432

My name is Ailish Kress (pronouns she/her), and I work as a mental health counselor and part-time as a high school coach (track and field).

I am a queer, cis woman proud to live in a state that largely celebrates and protects people with a whole array of diverse identities. Even though I am not trans, I understand that policies and laws that pave the way for discrimination hurt every single one of us. Sometimes, especially, the ones who compromise their integrity and human decency by perpetrating discrimination.

I had to do a lot of research in grad school, so let me share some numbers with you: a recent Gallup poll (2022) shows that about 20% of Gen Z identifies as LGBTQ+, and over 7% of Americans of all age groups identify as LGBTQ+, 10% of whom identify as trans. Extrapolated, that is 0.7% percent of the adult US population, or about 1.8 million people; in Maine, 0.7% percent of the population would be nearly 10,000 people. It's a small percentage but a large absolute number of people, all of whom deserve to have their human rights, dignity, and gender identities respected and protected. These numbers seem to reflect my personal observations in the last decade on how many more people, of varying ages, are comfortable being publicly out - not because there are more queer people in younger generations necessarily, but because they have confidence that their identities are protected by the law. LD 1432 is discriminatory and ignores the complex intersection of sex, sexuality, and gender by trying to remove gender identity as a protected class.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on this bill.

Gallup poll (2022):

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/389792/lgbt-identification-ticks-up.aspx>