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Gray, 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 through written testimony. My name is Maggie Bouchard and I am a resident of Gray. I am writing as a trans person who went through all of my schooling in the state of Maine, graduating from high school in 2012, and as someone who has worked in this state as a youth and young adult advocate and mental health support worker for over 5 years. I am writing in strong opposition to the bills being presented before the committee today.

As a youth advocate at a sexual assault response service and a support worker for youth with mental health challenges in Maine, I saw clearly how policies that support and include non binary and trans students allow young people to thrive in school and connect genuinely with their communities. Unlike bills such as these, that do nothing but discriminate against, police, and shame all students in an atmosphere that should be supportive and caring of their autonomy and their personal understanding of self. I have seen this from my roles and also first hand as a young trans person who grew up in these schools. These bills take us back in time where students are picked apart, harassed, and the privacy of women and girls is violated.

All of these bills would infiltrate our schools and communities and isolate people from each other. When shelters, schools, and after school extracurriculars like sports, should be caring, open minded, and connective places. The CDC reported that suicide deaths among youth and young adults ages 10-24 increased by 63% from 2007 to 2021. National survey data collected from more than 61,000 transgender and non binary youth stated that "anti-transgender laws significantly increased incidents of past-year suicide attempts among transgender and nonbinary youth by as much as 72%." As an advocate and mental health support worker, I have seen these statistics in real time, and they have broken my heart in a million ways. I have supported many youth and young adults in some of the hardest moments. As a once closeted queer and trans person, I support youth because I know how it feels to be overwhelmed and eclipsed by the lack of support coming from adults to be myself, and how scary and hopeless it can be. For these reasons, I will never support any bill that bullies, isolates, or wrongfully controls any person from being themselves. No bills should block people from receiving support or participating in their community. Youth are doing amazing things and are building caring communities in schools and all over the state. Bills like these stunt them from doing so and control them and their growth. These bills are not the way we support and care for trans people or any people, they will not help young people thrive and they will not support our state in changing these statistics.

I have lived here my whole life and I have seen this state take initiative to protect the human rights of all people. These bills would harm the work done by Mainer's to make this state a more supportive place for trans people and for our communities as a whole. Do not let us move backwards and create more shame and hurt, instead I hope we can keep moving towards

openness, curiosity, and acceptance. I urge you to oppose these bills, so Maine can keep growing and supporting all of the people who live here.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on all of these bills. Thank you.