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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee.

My name is Kalisto Zenda Nanen, I'm a resident of Cyr Plantation, Maine, and I am here on my experience as a trans Mainer. I am here today in opposition to the bills before the committee today, including the proposal that would require schools to refer to students exclusively by the name and gender listed on their birth certificate unless written parental permission or legal documentation is provided.

This bill is an alarming attempt to regulate identity—specifically targeting trans youth by forcing them to seek parental approval or legal documentation simply to be addressed by the name they use every day. It is not about protecting children; it is about controlling them. It allows parents who may already be disengaged in their child's education to exert unnecessary oversight simply because they disagree with their child's identity.

The reality is that names have always been flexible in daily life. My own parents, Mary Teresa and Charles Joseph, have long gone by Tree and Joe, respectively. My name journey is no different— When I first transitioned I liked the name Zeke at home, I shifted from Calista to Kalisto, and never had to defend or justify that change. But when trans youth make similar shifts, they suddenly become a problem for lawmakers.

This bill does not just impact trans students—it sets a precedent that ignores the realities of foster youth, adopted children, and students who simply prefer a nickname or their middle name. For many foster youth, obtaining legal documentation or written parental consent is not always feasible. Should these students be denied the right to be called by the name they recognize just because their paperwork does not reflect it?

At the same time, this bill burdens teachers and administrators who are already stretched thin due to staff shortages. Additional calls home for something as minor as a name preference waste time and resources. Parents may not always answer, and schools should not be forced into policing identity when their focus should be on education and student support.

Public schools are meant to be spaces of learning and growth, not environments where trans youth must fight for the right to exist as themselves. I urge the Committee to reject this bill and instead support policies that affirm and protect all students.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee.