

Clara Porter
Portland
LD 868

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee,

My name is Clara Porter, I am a resident of Portland and the parent of a trans son.

I submit this testimony in opposition to the bills before the committee today.

My son first came out to us at age 3 when he calmly stated while playing, “When I grow up, I’m going to be a boy” and then continued with play. It took 13 more years for him to come out to us again and in the intervening years he experienced dysphoria, depression, and learning challenges. This is a child with a supportive family and community. Yet he struggled to reconcile his identity as a trans boy - now man - because of all the messages from our society that this is wrong and somehow shameful.

As an adult, he has experienced discrimination and hate based on his identity. People have harassed him face to face and from cars – hurling threats and curses – clearly targeting him specifically because he is trans/queer man.

What made a difference?

As a child:

- Being in a school which honored his name and pronouns and had both gendered and gender-neutral bathroom options.
- Having school counselors and teachers who listened and supported his journey.
- Participating in Girl Scouts – always an inclusive space – in a Troop made up of girls, trans, and nonbinary children.
- Participating in the Portland Porpoises swim team – helping him feel part of a group and connected to his body even as he explored his identity.

As an adult:

- Being in a state that consistently affirms his rights through law and policy.
- Being part of community organizations which support queer and trans youth and young adults.

As children seek to find themselves – which they all do – they must be afforded schools which support them and allow them to be themselves and community programs which are inclusive and safe. As adults, we all need to feel supported and protected by the state which we call home.

These have been the keys for my son, now a college senior in Maine. He is a caring adult who contributes through work and volunteering in his community and is very much himself.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote, “Ought NOT to Pass” on these bills,

Thank you.