

Testimony Opposing Proposed Acts Regarding Gender Identity and Healthcare in Maine

To the Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Stephanie Hendrix and I am a resident of Maine. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed legislative acts listed for public hearing on May 8, 2025, specifically LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, LD 1337, LD 1432, and LD 380. These bills, individually and collectively, seek to undermine the rights, safety, and well-being of transgender and gender-diverse individuals in our state, and I urge you to reject them.

These proposed acts are based on misinformation and harmful stereotypes. They attempt to solve problems that do not exist while simultaneously creating significant harm to a vulnerable population.

LD 233 and LD 1134, which aim to prohibit transgender girls from participating in school sports consistent with their gender identity, are discriminatory and exclusionary. Participation in sports offers significant physical, social, and emotional benefits. Excluding transgender girls not only deprives them of these opportunities but also sends a damaging message that they are not fully recognized as girls. Existing policies in Maine already provide a framework for fair play and can be adapted as needed without resorting to outright bans that harm transgender youth.

LD 868 and LD 1704, concerning access to restrooms and changing rooms, similarly seek to codify discrimination. These bills ignore the reality that transgender individuals have lived authentically in their gender identity, often for years. Forcing them to use facilities that do not align with their gender identity is not only disrespectful and dehumanizing but also increases their risk of harassment and violence. Creating separate and unequal facilities is not a practical solution and further marginalizes transgender individuals.

LD 1002, requiring public schools to use the name and gender specified on a child's birth certificate, disregards the lived experiences and evolving understanding of gender identity. For many transgender and gender-diverse youth, their birth certificate does not reflect their true gender identity. This bill would force schools to misgender and deadname students, causing significant distress and undermining their sense of self and belonging within the school community.

LD 1337 and LD 1432, which seek to amend the Maine Human Rights Act to remove consideration of gender identity, represent a direct attack on fundamental human rights. The Maine Human Rights Act currently provides crucial protections against discrimination based on gender identity. Removing these protections would leave transgender and gender-diverse individuals vulnerable to discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and other vital areas of life. This would be a significant step backward for equality and inclusion in our state.

Finally, **LD 380**, which aims to amend laws regarding gender-affirming healthcare services, threatens access to medically necessary care for transgender individuals. Gender-affirming care is evidence-based and can be life-saving for transgender people experiencing gender dysphoria. Decisions about medical care should be made between patients and their healthcare providers, not dictated by legislative bodies based on political agendas. Restricting access to this care would have devastating consequences for the health and well-being of transgender Mainers, particularly youth.

In conclusion, these proposed acts are discriminatory, harmful, and unnecessary. They are based on fear and misunderstanding rather than facts and compassion. I urge the Judiciary Committee to recognize the profound negative impact these bills would have on transgender and gender-diverse individuals in Maine and to vote against their passage. Let Maine remain a state that values equality, inclusion, and the fundamental rights of all its residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Hendrix
Bangor, Maine