

Julia McDonald
Augusta, Maine
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee.
Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

My name is Dr. Julia McDonald, my pronouns are she/they and I reside and work in Augusta, Maine. I am testifying today on behalf of my niblings (a gender-neutral term for nieces and nephews), some of whom are trans and non-binary, on behalf of my gender-non-conforming patients, and on behalf of my younger queer self who fought to stay alive in the presence of homophobia, hatred and bigotry in the 90s.

I am writing in opposition of all the bills before the committee today. (I cannot attend in person because I am at work, taking care of our community members at a Maine hospital.) We are living in unprecedented times, when personal attacks on humans – especially the most vulnerable members of society – threaten basic universal human rights. Attacks on trans-Americans, especially trans-women and trans- and non-binary girls, dehumanize the very existence of these minorities. Targeting trans-girls encourages gender-based bullying and threaten all children, especially girls. Legislative mandates for schools to “out” children to potentially non-supportive parents will make both home and school unsafe. Protective measures, like the Maine Human Rights Act (HRA), were created to prohibit discrimination. Why would we reverse protections with LD 1337 and 1432? Maine must stand up against the current wave of hateful White Nationalism that seeks to “other” people who fall outside of narrow definition of “normal.” Removing one group from Maine’s HRA will open the gates for attacking all others.

Furthermore, as a physician, I am deeply concerned about LD 380. Gender-affirming care SAVES LIVES. Transgender youth and adults face societal stress and discrimination, which increases risk of suicide, self-harm, and poor health outcomes.¹ A 2024 study found that anti-trans bills and laws increase suicide attempts in trans-youth by up to 72%.² Repealing Maine’s Shield Law would subject Maine’s already-strained healthcare infrastructure to out-of-state criminal prosecutions for providing standard-of-care, evidence-based health care. LD 380 will cause great harm to doctors like me and to the patients we serve.

I believe in a safe, just world in which kids can be accepted for who they are. I believe we can do better than divisive, hateful discrimination and bans on names, pronouns, bathroom use and sports participation. I believe we can rise above these personal attacks and instead focus our efforts on more important and pressing issues: affordable healthcare, housing for all, food for the hungry, strengthening Maine’s economy, and building resilience in a changing climate and world. We can do better. Please oppose all eight harmful bills: LD 233; LD 868; LD 1002; LD 1134; LD 1704; LD 1337; LD 1432; and, LD 380.

Thank you,
Dr. Julia McDonald
Augusta, Maine

¹ <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/press/transpop-suicide-press-release/>

² <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/anti-transgender-laws-cause-up-to-72-increase-in-suicide-attempts-among-transgender-and-nonbinary-youth-study-shows/>