

Sydney Avitia
Southern Maine Workers' Center
LD 868

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Sydney Avitia, I'm a resident of Portland, and I am representing the Southern Maine Workers' Center, to oppose all of the bills before the committee today.

The Workers' Center represents thousands of poor and working class people across the state, and our mission is to improve the lives and working conditions of these workers. Our members, many of whom are trans, work in restaurants, healthcare, childcare, education, social services, agriculture, and retail— the jobs that feed us, clothe us, and care for us.

In the last decade, discrimination on the basis of gender and sexuality has been one of the top three most frequent issues we've heard from workers about. We know all too well that this kind of discrimination stops workers from being able to do their jobs. Simply put, these bills single people out for our physical appearance and medical needs. Instead, we should be designing systems where all people, regardless of physical appearance and medical history, can participate fully in education and the economy.

We understand that many of the people supporting these bills are concerned about safety and fairness, in schools and beyond. We care deeply about the safety, opportunity, and human rights of every Mainer. But we urge you to look at the facts. Trans people in bathrooms are harmed far more often than they are violent. If we want fairness in sports, the culprits are the wealth inequality and vast geographic disparities that intensely affect a student's ability to succeed, even in the most affordable sports. To cultivate safety at school and at work, let's protect the Maine Human Rights Act and honor its commitment to care for every human life—not just those who conform to one idea of how people should dress and look.

If these bills pass and trans people are written out of existing in public spaces, we are not the only ones who will suffer. The trans Mainers who fill many crucial, underappreciated roles in our care economy will suffer. But so will all other Mainers who benefit from the work we do, paid and unpaid, to care for our communities.

Respectfully,
The Southern Maine Workers' Center