

T. Reed Miller
Old Town, Maine
May 8th 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Reed Miller. I am here today as a private citizen, and I serve as faculty at UMaine. I am here in opposition of the bills before the committee today, and in particular would like to focus on *LD 1002: An Act to Protect Children's Identification by Requiring Public Schools to Use the Name and Gender Specified on a Child's Birth Certificate*.

My father went to a private Catholic school as a child. His name was not mentioned in the Bible, so the nuns picked one that was in the Bible and called him that from K-12. Needless to say, he does not reflect fondly on that experience. If this bill goes forward, the state of Maine will force staff in its schools to be just as overbearing on the children they instruct, mentor, and care for.

That is because this bill would require students to be referred to by the official name listed on their birth certificate, unless a parent or guardian provides written permission or a legal name change. **I would like to raise that this bill would prohibit students from being called by common nicknames.** While the bill is clearly intended to focus on just a minority of students who go by a name commonly associated with a different gender than the one they were assigned at birth, it will unintentionally harm students of all genders.

How many of us have a friend or family member called one of these names:

- Alex, Tony, Ben, Benny, Charlie, Chris, Dan, Danny, Dave, Ed, Fred, Harry, Jim, Jamie, Jake, Jerry, Johnny, Joe, Joey, Matt, Mike, Nate, Nick, Pat, Rich, Ricky, Dick, Rob, Robbie, Bob, Bobby, Sam, Steve, Theo, Tom, Will, Bill, or Billy?
- Abby, Allie, Barb, Cathy, Kate, Liz, Beth, Bella, Jackie, Hen, Jenny, Josie, Maggie, Becky, Sally, Sue, Tess, or Vicky?

Unless those students' hardworking parents made the time to submit a written form to their already-overwhelmed school district, their teachers, nurses, and principals, and faculty of first-year college students would be bound by law to call them only:

- Alexander, Anthony, Benjamin, Charles, Christopher, Daniel, David, Edward, Frederick, Henry, Jacob, James, John, Joseph, Matthew, Michael, Nicholas, Patrick, Richard, Robert, Samuel, Stephen, Theodore, Thomas, and William.
- Abigail, Alice, Barbara, Catherine, Elizabeth, Isabella, Jacqueline, Jennifer, Josephine, Margaret, Rebecca, Sarah, Susan, Theresa, and Victoria.

Imagine trying to explain to a first grader called "Billy" his entire life that actually he needs to respond to "William" from now on, because the state of Maine decided that it was a legislative

priority. Later on in high school, Billy might decide he would prefer to be called “Bill” now, but that would require an additional parental approval.

So, I wanted to speak today with hopes of preventing Maine from becoming the laughingstock of the nation. Imagine the headlines: “State of Maine forbids teachers from calling students Becky, Billy, and Bobby”.

Realizing this unintended consequence, the legislature may choose to amend the bill to automatically permit common nicknames to be used. However, there is no standard or exhaustive list for what a common nickname is. The state would then be forced to maintain a registry of pre-approved nicknames, to be amended annually when constituents alert them that “Bella” is not just a nickname for “Isabella”, but also “Annabella” and “Arabella”. So, instead of focusing on actual issues such as job opportunities or the housing crisis, the state legislature will be forced to foolishly waste time and taxpayer dollars.

This bill should not move forward. Thank you for your time.