

Jayden Colby
Norway
LD 1432

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Jayden Colby, I live in Norway. I am here in opposition of the bills before the committee today. I am here as a member of the Unitarian Universalist faith, which affirms and promotes justice, equity, and compassion in human relations and the inherent worth and dignity of every person. I am a Member of the First Universalist Church of Norway and MUUSAN, the Maine UU State Advocacy Network which supports legislation that embodies these values. I'm also here as an occupational therapist, and someone who has worked in public schools for over a decade.

Children deserve a safe, welcoming environment in order to be comfortable, to learn, to grow, and to thrive. I believe all children are entitled to this, including transgender ones. My faith does not discriminate. Neither does my professional practice. As an occupational therapist, I am bound to an ethical code. Our core values prioritize justice, including social justice and the need for "addressing unjust inequities that limit opportunities for participation in society." These very bills in front of you today were created with the purpose of limiting opportunities to participate in society. That is unjust.

Transgender people are already marginalized and subject to many forms of discrimination, just for simply existing. There is no credible evidence that transgender people pose a threat to youth or anyone else, so these bills merely reinforce harmful and false myths. Not only do they reinforce harmful myths, but anti-trans bills also cause up to a 72% increase in suicide attempts among transgender and nonbinary youth, according to the Trevor Project. A 72% increase in suicide attempts is horrifying. The world must feel incredibly unsafe when the people in power enact laws that seek to criminalize your very existence, simply for being who you are. Can you imagine living in a state where discrimination against your very existence, something that has been legally protected, is suddenly revoked? Please, do not let our great state of Maine be responsible for causing this harm.

It is never the right call to roll back civil rights. We must keep our children protected, including the most vulnerable. All children deserve a safe learning environment, where they are free to be themselves, participate fully in society, and thrive. We cannot go down the path of stripping these rights away from certain individuals. In schools, the Pledge of Allegiance is recited every morning. Our children are indoctrinated with the words "liberty and justice for all." How dare you change that "some."

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!