

Testimony of Max Bachvarova
May 8, 2025

To:

Senator Anne Carney, Senator Rachel Talbot Ross, Senator David G. Haggan

*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*

Good morning Senators, Representatives, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Max Bachvarova, I am a resident of Portland and an alum of the Portland Public School District. Thank you for hearing my voice. I stand here today to oppose LD 1002.

While I was still in my mother's womb, my older brothers asked my parents if they could hold the responsibility of naming me. Believing that I would be born male, they chose to endow me with a traditionally masculine name: Max. However, when I was assigned female at birth my family panicked and gave me a legal name they believed would give me better gender protections. They never used that name to identify me. In all meaningful contexts, it was never *my* name, but rather a legal marker that haunted me and ultimately threatened my wellbeing.

As a child and young adult, I navigated an educational system that inflicted an inordinate amount of pain on me. I was marked for harassment because my teachers would call me by my legal name before they knew me; but I knew myself and my classmates knew me. My legal name was wielded to inflict pain from the mouths of my peers. To make me feel less than, to make me small, to strip me of my autonomy and self-hood. My legal name was used to other me. The repercussions of a decision made in a single moment, to write a name with the intention of giving me options, on a day before anyone in the world knew who I was or who I might become, resulted in a series of experiences that made me wish I had never been born at all.

Distinctly, the fact that adults in the world were asked to refer to me by my official birth name — even without legal force to demand that they must — threatened my wellbeing. The teachers that became my favorites, whom I felt safest around, and who I gained the most knowledge and wisdom from were the ones who handed us the autonomy to identify ourselves and asked us who we were before forcing identities upon us that we had no voice in crafting.

Ask yourself this: who does this bill truly protect and who does it harm?

I ask of you: recognize the veiled nature in which scapegoating transgender children threatens the safety and wellbeing of all children.

Thank you for your time,



