

Aurelia Snow
Old Town
LD 1432

Esteemed members of the Maine legislature,

I am writing today to testify in exuberant and fierce opposition to LD 1432 - An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Maine Human Rights Act.

I am writing today as a woman born and raised in the state of Maine, as a student in the University of Maine Master's of Social Work program, as a member of the National Association of Social Work Students in good standing, as an early education care provider of over a decade, and as a believer in Christ who wishes to embody his core values of mercy, compassion, empathy, equity, inclusion, diversity, and accessibility. I am writing because at the intersection of all of my identities is someone who supports the representation and protection of my transgender, gender non-conforming, and cultural multi-gender neighbors.

Even though I was born and raised here, there was a period of four years where my husband and I lived and worked in the Arlington/DC area. We had good jobs and a beautiful little apartment, friends and family close to us, and investment in our community. However, when the current administration rose to power I told my husband that I wanted to live in a place where all people are free to be themselves - that no one's core identity is politicized for the benefit of those in power - place where I could freely practice my own beliefs of individual freedom without becoming a legal or political target. This is why we decided to move back to Maine, purchase our first home, and begin attending a local church and building volunteer connections here. Maine is still a beacon of hope.

Seeing this act brought before the legislature fills me with worry and sorrow. I have read the entire act multiple times and it was gut-wrenching to see "gender identity" be crossed out of paragraphs which describe basic human rights such as housing, employment, labor unions, accommodations, banking and credit considerations, and education. In this state, we prioritize privacy, personal freedom, and responsibility. We have a reputation for being "kind, but not nice". We want to be left alone to live our lives in and in turn, will leave others alone. LD 1432 is a blatant disregard for the personal rights and freedoms of our neighbors to choose how to conduct their own lives. It seeks to apply a punishment to trans, gender non-conforming, and cultural multi-gender Mainers for simply not living like a specific sect of people demand. By removing discrimination protections it sorts people into "worthy" and "not worthy" categories for basic human rights, and this is antithetical to the spirit of Maine.

I have noticed that time and time again, the people of Maine speak loudly to their belief in personal liberty, and acts similar to LD 1432 keep failing to thunderous applause. The people of Maine simply do not want federal or state regulators checking their underwear before being hired at a job, or demanding that women "look more feminine" in order to be rented an apartment. To suggest that the intimate aspects of a person such as their physical appearance, body parts, or their self-perception can dictate the worth, dignity, and protection of a human life is unacceptable. This does not only dehumanize trans Mainers but could also be used in the future to disqualify disabled Mainers, Intersex Mainers, and the women and girls of Maine. LD 1432 is dangerous for all!

Today, I am relying on the common sense and core values of our legislators to rise above. Please vote against LD 1432 with the power and knowledge of all Mainers behind you. In Maine, we believe in personal freedom and liberty for ALL of us - the right to live as we choose, the right to conduct ourselves as we see fit, and the right to receive protection from those who would force us to be otherwise.

Respectfully,
Aurelia.