

Good afternoon Distinguished members of the Judicial Committee. I am opposed to LD 1432 and the elimination of gender identity as a human characteristic warranting protection. The Trump threat endorsed by his Republican colleagues to deny federal educational funds to schools where transgendered athletes compete in sport is an act of intolerance not unlike that seen during the Holocaust. Changes to Maine's Human Rights bill by excluding gender identity is an intolerance of difference not unlike that seen during the Holocaust. Please remember that during the Holocaust 100000 men identified as homosexuals were arrested, many deported to concentration camps, where about half died. Here in Maine please remember the murder in Bangor 40 years ago of Charlie Howard, a 23 year old homosexual brutally attacked by 3 teenage boys. Support for LD 1432 denigrates Maine's outrage at that intolerance.

Additionally, support for LD 1432 is based on a fundamental failure to understand developmental biology. Chromosomal assignment at the moment of conception must be followed by an array of gene-directed processes that foster (or don't) development of secondary sex characteristics. Developmental Biology, 6th edition tells us: "In mammalian primary sex determination, there is no 'default state'. The formation of ovaries and testes are both active, gene-directed processes. Moreover, as we shall see, both diverge from a common precursor, the bipotential gland."

Legislators supporting LD 1432 imply that the genetic structure of gender is being undermined by environmental influences. Gender is not cast in stone at the moment of conception. Multiple other gene-influence processes must unfold. The effort to deny transgendered individuals human rights falsifies the role of genetics. Hannah Arendt in "The Origins of Totalitarianism" calls this falsification of fact "simple forgeries from the viewpoint of scholarship" that the followers fall in behind or don't bother to verify but reference to inspire" is commonplace under totalitarianism." Public humiliation of a transgendered young person who competes in an athletic event endangers that person's mental health in the same way any assault on body and mind might, sexual assault, date rape, physical abuse. Adolescence are especially vulnerable to the public or private denigration because it is at adolescence that a heightened awareness of identity emerges. LD 1432 is based on a falsification of developmental biology and intolerance for human difference. Intolerance for human difference sets the stage for any number of atrocities. I urge you not to pass this bill.

Susan Cook  
Bath, Maine Licensed Psychologist, Brunswick, Maine  
LD 1432

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