

Kate Johnson, Portland, ME, May 8, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the committee:

My name is Kate Johnson. I'm from Portland, Maine, and grew up in Augusta, as did generations of my family before me. I'm here on behalf of my colleagues, community members, and loved ones – each one with a unique identity and expression – and each one deserving of protection under the Maine Human Rights Act as it stands today. I'm here in opposition to LD 1432.

Watching the sweep of anti-transgender sentiment across our towns, states and country has been terrifying to me. I care deeply about the right to self-expression – federally, it's named in our First Amendment, as exemplified in *Doe vs. Yunits*\* in 2001. Part of the Maine ethos is a live-and-let-live attitude, and as parts of the country have become more politically and literally violent toward trans people, Maine is a safe haven to be who you are and be left alone about it. This bill feels like a step away from that respect for others.

This is personal for me – I express my gender in a nontraditional way, and will continue to do so throughout my life. I know my history: the three-article rule\*\*, used informally by police to harass and arrest queer people, was not so long ago, and reading news articles about people being questioned in womens' restrooms for “not looking feminine enough” sounds awfully similar\*\*\*. This bill would open Maine up to more of that citizen policing, which is invasive, harmful and protects nobody.

If this bill passes, my sex at birth will remain a protected class, but my gender identity, agender, and the associated right to express myself – just to exist as I stand before you, and to make unquestioned choices about my body and my healthcare – will come into question. I do not ask others **why** they choose to wear certain clothes or use their preferred restroom – please don't open the door to make others feel empowered to ask me those questions. The MHRA protects freedom **to** be as you are, even as that self evolves, and freedom **from** being denied your privacy and humanity. Please leave it be.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the committee, and thank you for supporting civil rights protections for all Mainers. I ask you to vote “Ought not to pass” on these bills.

**Doe vs. Yunits\***: <https://www.gladlaw.org/cases/pat-doe-v-yunits/>

**3 article rule\*\***: <https://www.history.com/articles/stonewall-riots-lgbtq-drag-three-article-rule>

**Bathroom harassment\*\***: <https://www.newsweek.com/liberty-hotel-boston-security-guard-suspended-bathroom-confrontation-2069312>