Maxwell Gagnon
Lewiston
LD 233

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee, firstly, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Maxwell Gagnon. I am 20 years old, and I am a life long resident of Lewiston. I am a transgender man, meaning I was born a girl, but live as a man. I am a life science biology student, and with my professors support, I have completed my final exams early so I can be here in opposition of all eight bills before the committee today.

When I was seven years old, I stood on top of the playground, looked down, and hoped that when I jumped off, it would kill me. After that, I did not go a year of my life without severe suicidal thoughts, plans, or action.

At 12, I realized I was transgender. For the next year, I did everything I could think of not to be. I tried makeup and dresses, and anything that could feminize myself. I was at one of the lowest points I've ever been.

As I moved to High School, I knew I couldn't take it any longer. Although my family had not shown they were safe, my school had. I came out as a transgender man and began my social transition. I changed my name and my pronouns, and my school respected my gender identity. For the first year since I was seven years old, I did not experience suicidal thoughts.

It is because of the support of my school that I am able to stand here today, and ask you all to vote against the bills put forward. My story is not unique. Other people before me have discussed the severity of suicide rates and the statistics around them, like the 72% rise in suicide attempts for trans youth that was found to have a causal relationship with the rise of anti trans legislation.
but we are more than numbers.
We are your children, friends, family, and peers. We are not your enemy. We just want to be comfortable in the bodies we were given, and have that be accepted.

Maine should be a safe place for our kids to grow up. No child should ever be bullied by their own government.

LD 1002 alone would have kept me from receiving the support I desperately needed. Bans on trans kids in sports or bathrooms will only further target and isolate them. We have studies that show the damage these laws can cause, and none to support them being implemented to begin with.

Yes, women are at disproportionate risk of sexual harassment, assault, and discrimination due to their gender. This includes trans women. In fact, trans people are over four times more likely to be victims of violent crime. Trans girls will still need to use the bathroom and change in locker rooms, even if these bills are passed.

Yes, locker rooms are unsafe. How will it be for the trans girls forced into boy locker rooms? What about their comfort, their safety? How will they be protected? These bills will only reverse the problem. Trans kids are not acceptable collateral.

Finally, I want to touch on something I have not heard anyone else bring up in the time I've been here.
Maine is a very white state. I am lucky to be from Lewiston, and have been able to grow up in a community strengthened by the diversity people of color, particularly immigrants, bring to our country. These bills will disproportionately affect people of color, particularly women. Women of color are often masculinized, and their femininity constantly scrutinized. In Olympic level sports, it is women of color that are targeted for invasive hormonal and chromosomal tests, because they do not always conform to the white ethnocentric beauty standards of what a woman 'should look like'. This trend will apply to our schools. Young girls of color, both cis and trans, will be particularly targeted by this. Racial minorities, especially immigrants, new to our beautiful state, are already the target of severe racist bullying. This hatred does not need a new weapon to use against these vulnerable groups.

I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills, and ensure that all kids receive the same opportunities for love and support as I did. They deserve it. Thank you.