

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee again today.

My name is Stacie Bourassa and I live in Biddeford, Maine. I am a board member of PFLAG Portland Maine, and the parent of an adult trans child.

We know that the freedoms we've fought to win don't always stay won. We have to keep showing up to fight for what we believe in, because the motivations that allow atrocities like slavery and genocide to occur are still alive and well today.

We know the damaging results of exclusion and discrimination, as did your predecessors who voted to include gender identity in the Maine Human Rights Act two decades ago. This protection was added because it was recognized as necessary. What's changed for trans people since then? Not enough to justify removing it as I'm sure you could judge from today's hearings. Trans and nonbinary people might need protections more than ever before.

I think we can all recognize this for what it is- a targeted attempt to erase a marginalized group. Trans people have been here since people have been here, but what's different about right now is that there's a platform for this rhetoric and distraction.

We are here fighting to retain rights and protections. Maine has upheld gender identity in its Human Rights Act now for 20 years. It's part of why I've chosen to stay here as an adult, because my loved ones need these protections.

I am here today with other parents and we're terrified about what participating could mean for our families. But it's much more terrifying to picture a world where our kids and loved ones don't have equal rights. So, we're scared, but we are here with the goal of sharing our stories and making sure you see us. There were many more parents and family members who wanted to be here today but who couldn't accept the risk that comes with putting their name and town to their identities and experiences. I hope you understand the jeopardy it puts us in to be here publicly. To fight for what's already been won.

My family votes. We work full-time. We volunteer. We strengthen Maine.

Please hold the line on our values as a State and people. There will always be bad actors who are rallying to remove the rights and protection of others because they don't believe we all deserve equality. These motivations are still with us. Let's keep showing the country what inclusion looks like. We all know better, and I implore you to keep doing better.

Thank you for your time and consideration. **Please vote "Ought not to Pass" on LD 1337 and LD 1432.** From the mom of a trans son and a proud family of Mainers—thank you.