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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Katye Thatcher, I'm from Cape Elizabeth, and I am here in passionate opposition to all of the anti-trans bills before you today.

These bills are discriminatory and target a profoundly vulnerable group of Mainers who already face significant challenges. Transgender and nonbinary people experience higher rates of bullying, mental health issues – including gender dysphoria and body dysmorphia, diagnoses that are real and clinically recognized - death by suicide, and sexual violence.

LD 233 and 1134 are harmful, unnecessary, and discriminatory proposals that target transgender youth. They politicize school athletics and undermine inclusion, dignity, and equal opportunity. Sports are not only about competition – they are also about teamwork, health, confidence building, and community. Every student, transgender students AND their teammates, should have access to these benefits. Everyone loses when we take that away.

Education should be inclusive and supportive of all students. LD 868 undermines these values by promoting exclusion and discrimination. A much more effective solution to this perceived problem would be education and action to promote a just culture that prioritizes safety for all, respect for each other and each other's privacy, and, above all, consent.

LD 1002 would disregard the affirmed identities of transgender and nonbinary students and requiring school staff and students to disrespect and degrade their students and peers.

LD 1704 would deny transgender students the right to access facilities that align with their lived experience and would make school less safe for all students. Transgender girls are NOT a threat. They are under threat of attack. The least safe place for these girls is in a restroom designated for boys or men.

LD 1337 and 1432 propose changes to the Maine Human Rights Act that would undermine protections for transgender individuals. The Maine Human Rights Act was established to protect ALL individuals from discrimination. Altering it to exclude any group sets a dangerous precedent and contradicts the values of equality, inclusion, and safety that our state upholds. Such a move would not only be a step backward in our pursuit of equality but would also leave a vulnerable population exposed to discrimination without legal recourse.

LD 380 proposes changes that would restrict access to gender-affirming health care services for transgender patients. Such restrictions would have detrimental effects on the health and well-being of transgender Mainers.

Gender-affirming care is recognized by major medical organizations, including the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, as essential and life-saving. Denying access to this care can lead to increased rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide among transgender individuals. Gender affirming care literally saves lives.

Furthermore, restricting access to medically necessary care infringes upon the rights of individuals to make decisions about their own bodies in consultation with their healthcare providers. It sets a dangerous precedent of government overreach into personal medical decisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote “Ought not to Pass” on all eight bills under consideration here today and instead focus on policies that are inclusive, supportive, and protect and affirm the health and rights of every person in Maine and on education and action that promote a just culture that prioritizes safety for all, respect, privacy, and consent.