

Testimony in opposition to LD 1432: An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Human Rights Act

I am testifying as a constituent to share my opposition to LD 1432: An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Human Rights Act. I know the hearing was yesterday, but I still want to voice my strong opinion on this harmful bill.

Transgender people deserve the same basic and human rights as any of their neighbors in Maine. Every person deserves to live with dignity, safety, and equality, regardless of their gender identity. Supporting trans rights means affirming the basic principles of respect, inclusion, and justice for all.

I work in non-profit elder services and have seen firsthand the ways in which creating inclusive programs where *all* individuals feel safe and seen can mean the difference between someone accepting critical, life saving supports such as Meals on Wheels, home care, and even volunteer-based companionship.

My mentor is a gay man who was a part of the Stonewall riots and led a renowned elder care agency in Massachusetts for over 20 years. He was a pioneer in creating programs for LGBTQ+ older adults, safe and inclusive spaces where gay and transgender older people could build community and access culturally competent services. His incredible example - and the programs I was able to run under his leadership - showed me that people simply want to feel seen, safe and supported in their unique identities - whether that be as a trans person, a mother, or a State Legislator. Without these safe spaces, many of these individuals would have stayed in their homes and suffered without the many resources available to them. By removing requirements for their protections, LD 1432: An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Human Rights Act would further deter transgender individuals from taking part in community and accessing critical - and even life saving - supports and services.

I urge you to use your votes and your voice to safeguard the rights of our trans neighbors in the Maine Human Rights Act.

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