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***Testimony of Rep. Sam Zager introducing  
LD 675, An Act to Improve the Convenience of Public Restrooms  
before the Joint Standing Committee On Innovation, Development, Economic  
Advancement and Business***

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and esteemed IDEA committee members, thank you for hearing the *bipartisan* and *bicameral* LD 675, An Act to Improve the Convenience of Public Restrooms.

If you've been to a large venue in Maine to attend a concert, a sports event, or any event with hundreds or thousands of attendees, you may have noticed that the lines to get into female restrooms at busy times tend to be much longer than the ones for male restrooms. This unfairness is not limited to Maine, of course, and it has persisted for decades. The advent of family restrooms and unisex restrooms have not brought about what's known as "potty parity."

There's been academic and policy work in this area, and there's even a 501(c)3 not-for-profit called the American Restroom Association that looks at these issues.<sup>1</sup>

For a few decades, scattered municipalities and other jurisdictions have worked on it,<sup>2</sup> but to some extent that has meant going against the grain of building and plumbing codes. When I looked at the most current plumbing code adopted in Maine (2021), I read that "the minimum number of fixtures shall be calculated at 50 percent male and 50 percent female."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://americanrestroom.org/> The ARA's board has advocates for clean, safe, and accessible public restrooms, building and design experts, scientists, and others. See Ted Talk by its founder at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8I5liK2Ly2g>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2019/01/women-men-bathroom-lines-wait/580993/>

<sup>3</sup> Maine Plumbing Code, Section 422.1. <https://up.codes/viewer/maine/upc-2021/chapter/4/plumbing-fixtures-and-fixture-fittings#422.0>

LD 675 aimed to get the conversation started about how to adjust the relative amounts of male, female and unisex facilities in large venues. The bill led to detailed, good-faith conversations with the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation, the state plumbing board and others. We achieved an elegant compromise, embodied in the proposed amendment.

The Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) is an international standard that Maine uses as a template, choosing which sections to adopt or modify.<sup>4</sup> The UPC is updated every three years, and given how much effort goes into the adoption process, Maine customarily considers every *other* version (i.e. every six years). The compromise we reached is that the pertinent section of the UPC, dealing with fixture counts, would be adopted with the 2024 version, rather than waiting for the 2027 one. This will include Table 422.1, which essentially would achieve the gender fairness sought by LD 675.

Many thanks to Deputy Commissioner Joan Cohen for her collaborative spirit. I ask you to consider replacing the bill with the compromise amendment language. I'd be happy to try to answer whatever questions I can.

Thank you.

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<sup>4</sup> Other states, like Colorado, use the International Plumbing Code (IPC)