

Good afternoon Senator Carney, Representative Moone, and members of the Judiciary Committee My name is Rory Turnbull, my pronouns are they/them/theirs, and I am from Standish I am in full support of LD 535

I am 16 years old, and I am Transgender, Nonbinary I have been out and socially transitioned for two years now I love to write music, sing in my high school, select choir, act, draw, among other things And Maine is my home The word "home" means much more than some people think To me Maine is a place where I can be safe, happy, loved, and supported by my community But it still has much room for growth and improvement I want to help make that growth happen Before my transition, I was in middle school Way before then, I had never truly felt like my assigned gender at birth I didn't know I had any other options, but something always felt wrong I was raised pretty religiously I had no idea what transgender even meant

In middle school, I started puberty I felt horrible The small amount of strange I felt before erupted into this overwhelming feeling of utter self hatred I hated my body, and I didn't know why I started learning what trans nonbinary meant, and it felt right But I didn't feel like I could change anything yet I didn't feel okay with being trans, because of how little everyone around me knew This feeling, I now know is gender dysphoria, became so overwhelming I felt trapped in my own body, and I felt like there was no way out I didn't want to deal with that terrible feeling anymore, which got so bad that sometimes I could feel physical pain in my chest, and breathing was hard Living seemed more like a burden than a joy, and I didn't want to live anymore If I had known that healthcare, and gender affirming options were an option, I may not have felt so alone Soon I had gathered up the courage to come out to my mom and my dad My mom showed her full support, buying me chest binders, and helping me go get my haircut in a way that made a lot of that weight and pain go away The first time I put my chest binder on, I cried I cried and laughed with joy, I finally felt right in how I looked, and I ran downstairs to my mom and sisters and I was so excited, and they were happy for me too

The next year things would only get better I would meet a bunch of new people who support and love me to this day, and help me realize what "home" means Home isn't a house Home isn't a place Home is a community, full of people who love and support you, and listen to you I had finally found that But there are others who aren't as lucky as I am I am privileged in the way that because of my supportive family, that if I chose to I would have access to gender affirming care, such as gender therapy, hormones, etc But there are many others that I know who don't have that privilege, who go home not to a home, but to a house A house with people who won't listen to them, and the effects are irreversible There are many like me who never saw that option for care, or could see it but couldn't attain it And because of that, they are gone

To me, Maine is home Maine is a place where I can be myself, and where I can be listened to, and celebrated, and loved I have seen the effects of this miracle of healthcare on friends, and it brings people together, saves lives, and brings joy You all in front of me have the power to make Maine home, for all of us, to save lives, and to bring people together If we don't pass this bill, we would be taking away home from those who need it most Look into my eyes, see me, and listen Pass this bill Make Maine home, for all of us