

Good afternoon,

My name is Thomas Wood. I am a lifelong resident of Maine and currently live on Hartford Street in Lewiston, Maine. I am testifying in opposition to LD 227. I was born in the late 1950's and grew up in Maine. I have spent virtually my whole life in this state. I was educated in Maine, and have worked and paid taxes in Maine my entire adult life. I would think that most Mainers are familiar with the state motto, "Dirigo" translated from the Latin as "I Lead". I used to have a very positive view of our state, and its motto. Now, I believe, like many in this state, I question where are we leading. I believe that this state has become a leading proponent of positions that I do not agree with. I also believe that I speak for hundreds of thousands of Mainers who don't agree with the narrow liberal agenda that has overtaken the political affairs here in Augusta. Why is this public hearing is being held on such short notice? I found out about this bill about 24 hours ago. I believe this attempt to hold a public hearing in this manner is evidence that even the Democratic leadership does not really want the public to "weigh in" on this extremely egregious bill. When did the Democratic party abandon the ideals of political giants like Edmund Muskie?

I believe that many Mainers have questioned whether the Maine Legislature is "out of touch" with the people they were elected to represent. I maintain that this latest bill LD 227 is the most convincing and comprehensive evidence to date of Augusta's disconnection from many here in Maine. The term "tyranny of the majority" seems to clearly apply here in Maine at this point. Another question that I have as a taxpayer is "What is the legal, social, and moral cost of Maine putting itself in a position of promoting all of this gender ideology?" For example, are we going to have to build bigger courthouses and employ more judges and court employees to adjudicate the inevitable legal fallout from LD 227? A quick reading to the 27 pages gave me the impression that most of this bill is to create a "stacked deck" against anyone who opposes abortion or the so called "gender affirming care".

Another of the many questions I have is who is actually leading whom in this attempt to pass this latest ideologically charged legislation? I think that many

Mainers would have that same question. **The current leaders in this state are more than willing to lead our state into possibly hazardous legal areas for the sake of their narrow agenda.** Is the average Mainer in favor of putting Maine into this position. Let's say that a minor avails themselves of this gender-affirming care in Maine later decides that they want to change back to their original gender. If they believe they have been legally harmed, who are they going to take legal action against? **At what point does the sovereign immunity of Maine get called into legal question when it is the state itself that created the legal framework for this whole process? A certain percentage of minors with these gender-related issues have been abused in various ways as children. My understanding is that some research indicates that early childhood abuse can contribute to these issues. So, I guess my next question is: Does this bill put the state into the position of the protector of these children, or the agent of further abuse? As a person who once identified as a Democrat, I am wondering: "At what point did the current party leadership abandon democracy and become a weapon used against the very people they presume to represent. I call on all of the legislators of this state to have the moral courage to oppose LD 227. It is time to stop the madness of Maine being used as an incubator and laboratory for the latest initiative of this morally and legally divisive political agenda. In closing, given the failure of other "sanctuary" policies across the United States, why in the world would Maine want to become a so-called sanctuary in this area? My understanding of this whole sanctuary issue is to create a safe place for people to violate the laws of this country that have already been passed by Congress and other governing bodies. Even though I haven't quoted any Bible verse, you may even have guessed that I am a Christian. I am indeed a follower of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I believe that the only true and eternal sanctuary is in the love of Christ. My hope and prayer for is for this current legislature to have the courage to also oppose this bill.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas Wood

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