



Committee on Judiciary

LD 537 - An Act to Prohibit the Doxing of a Minor and to Authorize a Related Civil Action

March 3, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Respected Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Gia Drew, and my pronouns are she, her, and hers. I am the Executive Director of EqualityMaine, which has been representing and advocating for Maine's LGBTQ+ population since 1984. I am testifying on behalf of EqualityMaine and our colleagues at MaineTransNet, whose mission is to support and empower transgender people to create a world where they can thrive, and together we vigorously support **LD 537 - An Act to Prohibit the Doxing of a Minor and to Authorize a Related Civil Action.**

This law is necessary for several reasons, including the fact that LGBTQ+ youth across the country, and here in Maine, are at greater risk of intimidation, bullying, and harassment, than most of their peers. The physical and psychological threats are real, and LGBTQ+ kids are paying a horrible price for just being themselves. According to the 2023 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, LGBTQ+ students are twice as likely to be bullied at school in the past 12 months than their non-LGBTQ+ classmate and only 38% of LGBTQ+ kids say they have support from adults other than parents. Sadly, LGBTQ+ students are more than twice as likely to feel sad or hopeless and 2,600 LGBTQ+ high school students in Maine seriously considered suicide in the past year. That's enough to fill 54 school buses.¹ These grave statistics indicate that we need to put in place further support and protections for our young people in order to help them improve their mental health and their chance for not just success, but for their survival.

¹https://www.maine.gov/miyhs/sites/default/files/2024-01/MIYHS%20LGBTQ%2B%20Factsheet_FINAL_Approved_28Sep23.pdf

In today's digital age, it is easier than ever to spread information that can endanger a minor's physical and mental health. It is important to protect Maine children from people using the internet and social media sites to cause this harm. The internet has made it easier for minors to experience online bullying from not just their peers but even from adults. This bill will give youth who experience online bullying a remedy to collect damages from those that cause them harm on the internet. Additionally, this bill will help to deter doxing, which is shown to have massive impacts on a young person's mental and physical wellbeing during a critical period of their lives.

There have been recent incidents here in Maine where a minor's nonpublic information – including name, location, and photograph – have been shared on online platforms, leading to kids and their families facing threats to their physical safety, harassment, and the like. The success of this bill will help to reduce this type of activity now and in the future.

We urge you to support this important bill, and to vote Ought To Pass on LD 537. Together we can make Maine a safer state for young people, so they can live their lives without the threat of being doxxed and bullied by adults, who should know better, but apparently some don't. Of course this bill isn't a panacea, but it is an important tool that young people and their families can use to seek legal recourse against the dangerous efforts made by some to harass and intimidate minors in Maine.

Thank you,

Gia Drew (she/her)
Executive Director, EqualityMaine

Bre Danvers-Kidman (they/them)
Executive Co-Director, MaineTransNet