

Testimony Opposing LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704

Public Hearing: 9:30am May 8, 2025 – Judiciary Committee

Submitted by: Benn Marine, Cumberland, ME

Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Benn Marine, and you'll be hearing from me throughout today's hearings—in three different capacities.

This morning, I speak to you as a concerned uncle to children in Maine's public schools.

This afternoon, I'll return as a business leader and employer in Maine.

And later today, I will speak to you as a transgender man whose life has been shaped by my access to gender-affirming care.

Each of those parts of me carries a different perspective—but all of them are united by a deep belief that **every child deserves to feel safe, affirmed, and free to be themselves.**

I'm here to strongly oppose LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704.

These bills do not protect children—they put them at risk. They invite scrutiny of young people's bodies and identities. They turn classrooms and locker rooms into spaces of suspicion and shame. And they empower adults to question a child's legitimacy simply based on how they look or what name they use.

As an uncle, I want my nieces and nephews to grow up in schools that teach dignity, not fear. These bills would not make them safer. They would make them *more* vulnerable—to bullying, exclusion, and trauma.

And here's the core issue: **how would you know who is transgender?**

Would you inspect students' genitalia? Question their clothing, their voices, their bodies? These bills assume you can identify trans people on sight. You can't. And trying to enforce these laws would create a nightmare for students and educators alike. This will not harm just trans students, it will harm every student who does not fit into a very narrow perception of what it stereotypically means to be a boy or a girl. Who will likely be harmed the most by these bills? Strong girls, tall girls, black and brown girls, masculine girls. None of our kids win when emphasis is put on policing their bodies and how they express themselves.

These proposals do not protect girls. They don't create fairness. They simply create *more harm*—for *all* kids.

Let's protect childhood, not politicize it. Let's teach respect, not fear. Let's keep Maine a place where *every child* can thrive.

Thank you—and I'll see you again this afternoon.

With Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benn Marine", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Benn Marine