

In Opposition to LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Beth Lambert. I'm a parent and a lifelong educator with over 25 years of experience.

I'm here to voice my strong opposition to these bills—not only because they target vulnerable students, but because they raise serious and dangerous questions about implementation. Even if one were to set aside ethical concerns—and I believe we should not—the logistics alone should give us pause.

How will schools determine who is transgender and who is not? Will there be forms to fill out? Investigations to open? If a student is accused of being trans, who is responsible for verifying that? Will teachers or administrators be expected to examine birth certificates—or worse, body parts? How will parents feel when they learn that educators might be tasked with inspecting or questioning their child's body to determine which bathroom they can use, or what pronouns they are “allowed” to go by? Are we really prepared to turn our public schools into sites of surveillance and body policing?

These are not rhetorical questions. These bills provide no guidance on implementation. And in that void, they invite suspicion, anonymous reporting, invasive scrutiny, and violence. They open the door to profiling, rumors, and the inappropriate policing of young people's bodies.

I have led schools. I have worked with children and teenagers for more than two decades. I know what makes a school safe, and I know what makes it dangerous. These bills do not protect students—they endanger them. Not just transgender students, but any student who doesn't conform to someone else's expectations of what a girl or boy is “supposed” to look like or act like.

What happens to the girl with a deep voice or short hair who gets accused of being in the “wrong” bathroom? What happens to the boy who's not traditionally masculine but just wants to be left alone? These policies will harm far more children than they claim to protect.

Policies like these sow fear, suspicion, and division. They tell some students they are problems to be managed rather than young people to be supported. And they force educators into impossible positions, caught between their duty to serve *all* students and the legal threat of discriminatory mandates.

The truth is, safety isn't just about who shares a bathroom or locker room. It's about how we treat one another. It's about whether kids feel respected, believed, and protected—no

matter who they are. And when laws single out or stigmatize one group of students, they chip away at the foundation of belonging for *all* students.

As a non-transgender woman, I want to say again, unequivocally: I am not afraid of transgender women. Their existence does not threaten mine. What threatens me—and my values—is the erosion of empathy, evidence, and equity in how we shape education policy.

Please vote “ought not to pass” on these bills. Let Maine continue to be a state where our public schools are led by educators, not fear. Where we make decisions based on the well-being of *all* students, not political calculations. And where every child—no matter their gender identity—is treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Thank you for your time.