

Carolyn Kutny
Ellsworth, Maine
May 8, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee. My name is Carolyn Kutny. I am a resident of Ellsworth and a teacher at Ellsworth High School. As part of my teaching duties, I am the advisor to the Gender/Sexuality Diversity Alliance. I am here in opposition to the bills before the committee today and to offer the perspective of a seasoned public school educator.

As a high school teacher, I can attest that transgender teens are among the most vulnerable kids in any school. They face a constant struggle to be accepted and included in their families and with peers. Passing these bills would heighten this vulnerability and put those children at risk of violence, social isolation, substance abuse, poor mental health and negative educational outcomes, like dropping out of school.

As you consider these bills and policies, I urge you to consider the data available on this issue. There is no evidence to suggest that transgender teens pose a higher risk to others than anyone else, whether it is in sports, bathrooms, classrooms, or other school spaces. In fact, despite what the promoters of these bills would have you believe, transgender high school students are more likely to be victims than perpetrators. According to the 2021 Maine Integrated Health Youth Survey, transgender teens are twice as likely to have been bullied at school, are four times more likely to have been injured with a weapon, and are three times as likely to have skipped school due to feeling unsafe, as compared to their cisgender peers. Moreover, 52% of transgender teens have contemplated suicide, compared with only 15% of cisgender teens. These are profound statistics that should be driving this conversation. If anything, the committee should be taking steps to be more inclusive of their needs, not less. Identities aside, every single child in the state of Maine deserves our love, respect, support, and protection.

As of the 2023 Maine Integrated Youth Survey, 25.5% of Maine teenagers identify as in the LGBTQ community, and 4.5% of kids identify as transgender. That's thousands of our kids. I urge you to protect them by voting against these bills.