

Susan Hanley  
Orr's Island, Maine  
Today is May 8, 2025

Good Day Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee.

My name is Susan Hanley. I live on Orr's Island, and I am here to explicitly oppose bills LD 868, 1134, 1704 and 1432.

I am here to support LGBTQ people, their parents and allies. I want to remind all of us that transgender people have always existed in every century and every society.

Under our Constitution, every person has civil rights, freedoms to be themselves, safe and respected without harassment, bullying and abuse from others.

Bills LD 868, 1134 and 1704 would reinstate bans and restrictions of bathroom and locker room use, **walking us back in time where there is already codified law**. Bill LD 1432 would remove all references to gender identity as a protected class in the Maine Human Rights Act, **leading to an uncertain future for transgender people in our state where they have been safe to date**.

We must fight legislation authored to embolden fears, and discriminate against LGBTQ individuals and other minorities, perceived as a threat within our society by some.

I am a former teacher, middle school administrator, and was an adjunct professor of Human Growth and Development. Given my understanding of brain and human developmental research, no matter what age we let people drive vehicles, use guns, smoke, and vote, humans do not fully develop cognitively and emotionally into personhood until at least 30 years of age. Belonging is a human need, and feeling judged, shunned, labeled, or excluded for being transgender has a negative physical, social and spiritual impact on a person. In the brain, these offenses to one's psyche are the same as physical pain. By contrast an unfettered sense of belonging improves motivation, performance, and well being.

Difference is not a threat. There is room for everyone. My hope is we all walk in the world as if we belong, because we do. There is no inherent defect in a transgender person. These bills are not about transgender people, they are about other people's discomfort bias. The desire to lord power over a marginalized group is inherent in these bills. I have hope in human kindness, development, decency, and justice despite our unknown future.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspectives with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills that perpetuate hate and explicitly discriminate against transgender people. Thank you.