



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

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Devon Mulligan, I am a resident of Portland, and I am speaking on behalf of the Maine Youth Action Network to testify in opposition to all of the bills before the committee today: LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704.

At the Maine Youth Action Network, we work closely with young people across the state, including transgender and nonbinary youth. Central to our work is the power of youth-adult partnerships. We value youth voice, wisdom, and passion and trust them to tell their community who they are and what they need. We have seen, both in our work and relationships across the state, as well as in much of our research, that youth thrive when they are supported by adults who care about them as a whole person, who provide them with resources and support, and who promote belonging.

Thriving youth are those who feel seen, heard, and valued. They have access to supportive communities, affirming environments, and opportunities to express themselves authentically. This includes being able to participate in sports teams that align with their gender identity, use facilities that match their identity, and have their names and pronouns respected and affirmed. These are not privileges; they are fundamental aspects of dignity and well-being.

Rather than addressing genuine issues, these bills create problems where none exist. In a time when we should be focusing on policies that uplift and support all young people, these bills divert attention and resources toward legislating exclusion. They do not address pressing issues but instead perpetuate harm against a marginalized group. Rejecting these bills is not only a moral imperative but also a necessary step toward fostering a more inclusive and compassionate Maine.

Every day we partner with adults across the state and ask them to trust Maine youth, to invest in Maine youth. Today many of us here are asking you to do the same. I ask that you invest in the safety, well-being, and sense of belonging for all Maine youth by rejecting these bills and any similar efforts in the future.

**Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote for Maine trans youth and vote "Ought Not to Pass" on these bills. Thank you!**

Recommended reading:

<https://searchinstitute.org/developmental-relationships>

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