

Alex Roan, LCPC, Ph.D.
Westbrook, Maine
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to address you. My name is Alex Roan and I'm a clinical mental health counselor living in Westbrook. I am testifying today in opposition to bill LD 1432.

As a volunteer with Maine Transgender Network, I have been facilitating peer support groups for members of the transgender community in Maine for the past 20 years. Over the years I have led groups in Portland and Bangor, and I currently lead a group in Brunswick. Hundreds of transgender Mainers from all walks of life have come through my groups. I have met transgender bakers and bankers, teachers and truck drivers, scientists and grocery store clerks. People come to our group because they are looking for community and acceptance. Sometimes we talk about the challenges of being transgender, and sometimes, when things are going well, we talk about our gardens or pets or where to get the best lobster roll. In my 20 years of facilitating these groups, I have never seen as much fear and despair consistently expressed as I have in recent months. Participants are describing increased harassment in public - having strangers make lewd comments on the street, being followed in a grocery store, being threatened outside of a restaurant. *All* of us have been deeply impacted by recent attempts to roll back protections for transgender individuals. In general, I try to avoid reading the comments section in news articles, but sometimes I can't help myself. As a transgender person, I feel awful when I read the opinions of my fellow community members who believe that my deeply held identity is invalid, that I am not a "real man," and that my life ~~now~~ is a sham. Even if 80% of the comments are supportive, it is devastating to know that I may have neighbors who wouldn't bat an eye if I were fired from my job because my boss didn't like trans people. For the last several months I have been walking around with a pit in my stomach that grows with every news article I read about rolling back protections for transgender people.

One of the pieces of positivity that I am able to offer my group members expressing despair is the reminder that we are in Maine, a state where we live and let live, a state where we are legally protected. Please don't change that. Transgender people are valuable, contributing members of our Maine community who deserve to be protected from discrimination. I urge you to vote "Ought not to pass on this bill." Thank you for this opportunity to share my perspective as a transgender Mainer.