

May 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Dr. Wendy Chapkis. I live in Portland Maine and am grateful for the opportunity to address the Committee today. I am here to speak in opposition to the bills before the Committee on the rights of transgender girls and women.

Over my 30-year teaching career, I have always had trans students in my classes. Please do not believe the suggestion that trans identities are somehow something new; trans people have *always* been among us.

What has changed is that, over the past 3 decades, we have created enough safety for - and recognition of - trans people that more trans folks now feel able to come out publicly. That is an important and positive change. This legislation would endanger that progress and those lives.

Let me talk personally for a second. As you might guess if you see me, I am frequently misgendered as a man despite the fact that my identity as a woman actually aligns with the identity a doctor assigned me at birth. I just don't look like a woman is "supposed to look." My hair is too short, I'm too tall, I have a blonde moustache.

My body is evidence that there is no clear dividing line between trans and cisgender bodies.

Passing legislation ostensibly meant to protect cisgender girls and women from the supposed risks posed by trans girls and women would require policing of a very unstable gender line.

The proposed legislation before the committee today, would require all of us who are "unconventionally gendered" to constantly defend ourselves against claims that we do not belong in the category women. What evidence do you propose would suffice to prove that I "really" am female? That any of us are?

Are you really proposing physical examinations of each school girl wanting to play sports? Of each woman or girl who wants to enter a public restroom? Or will we be expected to carry paperwork at all times proving our gender? What paperwork would suffice?

Just this week, a lesbian couple – both cisgender women – were chased out of a public restroom in a Boston hotel by a security guard who failed to believe they were “really women.”

This kind of harassment would only increase with the passage of the kinds of laws you are considering today.

There are many urgent issues in front of the Maine legislature this year. Limiting the rights of trans people in this state is not – and should not be – one of them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wendy Chapkis', with a stylized, cursive-like script.

Wendy Chapkis

Portland, Maine

chapkis@maine.edu

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A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'W. Chapkis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wendy Chapkis

Portland, Maine

chapkis@maine.edu