

## Testimony - May 8th

My name is Eli Bundy, and I am a 20-year-old living in Brunswick, Maine and originally from South Carolina. I am thankful for the opportunity to speak today, but I wish that I did not have to. I am a trans person, a full time student, and I work to bring community together, both on my school's campus and in the broader Brunswick area. I would rather be studying for exams right now, but instead, I am speaking here today in strong opposition to all anti-trans bills before the committee.

I fought anti-trans legislation in the South Carolina Legislature for four years as a high school student, and I know how harmful anti-trans bills can be; for trans young people, for trans adults, for athletes, and for women, both cis and trans, whose bodies are more heavily policed and controlled when anti-trans policies are in place. After all, anti-trans legislation is ultimately about the ability of the state to control the bodies of its people without their consent, and this sets a dangerous precedent for the erosion of all of our rights.

Anti-trans legislation makes me feel small. It makes me feel like the elected officials meant to be making decisions on behalf of their constituents only care about winning political points by harassing trans kids because they can, because trans kids, and trans people in general, are a small minority without a loud political or financial voice. I am tired of asking politicians elected to serve the public to treat me as a human, to allow me the same rights and privileges that should be guaranteed to all people in this country: to have healthcare, to be educated in an inclusive space, to engage in meaningful community and connection with people both alike and different from us.

I was involved in youth sports throughout my childhood and adolescence, and I got to learn about the importance of collaboration, of working through conflict, of persevering to solve hard problems by being on sports teams. I changed clothes for PE in an actual closet (no joke) to avoid being lumped in with the girls or being ostracized by the guys. I was incredibly lucky to have a supportive family, good health insurance, a great high school, and yet I struggled with the feeling that I was completely unwelcome in the city and state in which I lived. I moved to Maine, in part, to escape this feeling, but I have since learned that this hatred of and apathy towards trans people is not unique to the south, but permeates every corner of this country.

However, this need not be the case. Trans people show the world that you do not need to accept the role you are given, that there are beautiful and expansive futures to be found in self-becoming, in community that is found through shared experience and struggle. Trans people will continue to exist everywhere no matter what laws are passed, but harassing and targeting trans people for political points is dehumanizing and cruel.

I urge you to leave trans people alone and oppose these bigoted and harmful bills. Thank you for your time.