

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Betsy Williams, I live in Brunswick and I oppose LD numbers 233, 8868, 1134, and 1704.

I have been a Unitarian Universalist all my life. From the playground to the workplace, Unitarian Universalists promote the unequivocal belief in the inherent worth of every human being. We covenant to actively reject efforts to discriminate against, or make less-than, any manifestation of humanity. I have come here today to honor this commitment.

Our scientific understanding of gender has evolved to recognize that gender is not binary. Like the binary “nature vs. nurture” debate in child psychology that ended with unanimous agreement that nature and nurture are both critical components of human development, today’s understanding of gender identity is that we *all* have masculine *and* feminine traits, and there is no “normal” that doesn’t include both.

The proposals in these bills will open a floodgate of harm. They are rife with discriminatory regulations that subject girls to different standards and procedures than boys. But discrimination pales in comparison to the deeper wounds these bills would inflict from the blatant denial of how a person defines themselves, who they know themselves to be as human beings. The high percentage of non-binary youth who suffer from anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation is well known.

None of us has a choice about the balance of our gender traits, it is our reality. But we do have a choice to accept ourselves, love ourselves for who we are and live as authentically as we can.

None of you have a choice about the gender reality of your constituents. But you do have a choice to accept the great diversity of gender identity, and to show love and respect for all humanity by refusing to agree to actions that deny anyone’s right to live as authentically as they can.

I urge you to vote ONTP on all these bills. Thank you.