

Christy Scheidt
Portland, Maine
May 8, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee regarding an issue that is very close to my heart.

My name is Christy Scheidt and I am the parent of a transgender young woman who attended high school in Portland, Maine. I am here in opposition of the bills before the committee today. I would like to specifically address LD 1002 and LD 1704.

My husband and I moved to Maine from out of state when our youngest child was 14 years old and about to enter high school. Naturally I wanted to find a school where my child would at the very least feel comfortable, and hopefully flourish. I knew that LGBTQ issues were important to my child so I made sure that the schools we considered were LGBTQ friendly. We were incredibly fortunate to find such a school that promoted an environment of acceptance and freedom of expression.

During her high school years, my child began expressing herself in ways that made her feel more genuine to her true self. This included wearing nail polish and makeup, adopting a more feminine hair style, and wearing skirts, dresses and feminine clothing. She was only able to do this because her school environment supported her self-expression. She had a nonjudgmental space in which she could be her true self, be a regular high school student and not worry whether someone was monitoring her bathroom choice. In fact, she was able to use the restroom of her choice, including the option to use a gender-neutral restroom. During her senior year she began identifying as non-binary and adopted they/them pronouns. Again, this was accepted by her school without question.

The school environment can be intensely challenging for transgender youth who are denied their self-expression. Laws that restrict the rights of trans youth promote a hostile environment for this already vulnerable population. The 2015 United States Transgender Survey Report found that 54% of people who were out or perceived as transgender in K-12 were verbally harassed, and 24% were physically attacked. It is well known that transgender individuals are at higher risk for suicide – this same study found that 48% of respondents had seriously thought about killing themselves in the past year, compared to 1.1% of the US population. Requiring written consent from parents further increases the burden of stress on trans students whose parents don't agree with their gender identity choices.

Allowing students to choose their name and pronouns is such a simple way to support students' development and identity. Denying them this right not only affects the individual student, but it sends the message that any gender nonconforming thoughts, actions and identities are not ok. Prohibiting schools from making their own policies regarding safe bathroom spaces is unnecessary. Had my child attended a school where different gender identities were not recognized or allowed, I have no doubt she would not be the confident, self-assured person she is today.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills. Thank you!

Reference:

James, S.E., Herman, J.L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Motet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality.