

Avery Munns  
Auburn, Maine  
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Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Avery Munns. I am a registered voter in Auburn, and I am a teacher in the Lewiston Public Schools district. I am here in opposition of the bills before the committee today.

First, I would like to comment on the idea of referring to students only by the name and gender on their birth certificate as addressed in bill LD1002. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs tells us that needs lower on the pyramid—first, survival, then safety, and then belonging—must be met for a student to access rigorous academic tasks. There is no way to make students feel like they belong without the basic respect of calling them by their name. If a student asks to be called by a nickname, we call them that. I have students whose families mistakenly registered their last name as a first name, so I call students by the name they ask. We shouldn't need to look at a birth certificate or go through the rigamarole of parental documentation—we should just keep it as simple as it is now and call students by what they want to be called.

Second, I would like to speak on the issues of bathrooms and facility use that are discussed in bills LD868, LD1134, and LD1704. Going back to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, being able to use the restroom is a physiological need at the very bottom of the pyramid. A student can't access learning if they're worried about their bodily functions. I remember myself as a transgender child and wanting to use the boys bathroom, but my teachers and classmates knew I was supposed to be a girl. I ended up not using the bathrooms at school at all and instead held it all day long. This was very stressful and distracted me from my studies. Students just want to focus on learning instead of having to worry about which bathroom or locker room they are legally allowed to use.

Finally, I would like to address the issue of sports participation in bills LD233, LD868, and LD1134. As a teacher, I have personally seen the social, physical, mental health, academic, and post-secondary benefits of participating in extracurricular activities. Now, I'd like you to think back to your own high school experience. Did you participate in any extracurricular activities? Why did you participate? My activity of choice was soccer, and I played for the love of the game, because my friends did, and because it made me happy. People are never living the difficulty of transgender identity for sports glory. Kids just want to have fun and be with their friends.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills. Thank you and have a great day.