

Jonas Maines
Augusta, ME
8 May, 2025

In Opposition to
LD 233, LD 380, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, LD 1337, and LD 1432

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary; my name is Jonas Maines. I live here in Augusta, and I offer my testimony in moral, human opposition to the bills before you today.

As some of you may be able to guess, I am a man: I was born a man, I have lived these twenty-seven years a man, and- as far as I can tell - I will likely always be a man. That's my truth; that's what feels right to me, and I've never had to prove that to anybody. I've never been made to justify who I am, or defend my identity to people who didn't care what I had to say, because they'd already made up their minds about me. The same cannot be said for my identical twin, and I can assure you that Nicole Maines had to fight a whole lot harder for her place in society to be honored, and it came with a lot more pain.

Now, I will not tell that story here- it is too long, it is too painful, but it had a happy ending: In 2013, the Maine Supreme Court ruled, for the first time in our nation's history, in favor of a transgender student in a bathroom discrimination case. That was based on changes to the Maine Human Rights Act in 2005. And in 2019, gender identity was enshrined as its own characteristic in the Maine Human Rights Act, ensuring that no Maine student would be subjected to the same suffering as my sister. It was a good day, a day that encapsulated our state motto, and embodied our shared Maine values of respect, compassion, and the right of each person to live their life fully and honestly.

Having grown up in Maine, there are a few things that I know in my heart to be true: I know that there is a season between Winter and Spring called "Construction;" I know that, no matter how bad of a driver you are, there is someone from Massachusetts who is worse; and I know that, in Maine, when our neighbors need our help, we give it to them.

The people here today need our help. To them, the Maine Human Rights Act isn't just a law, it is a promise: a promise that the injustices of the past will not be repeated; that here in Maine, we are not in the business of persecution. The bills before you today not only seek to break that promise, they fly in the face of everything that Mainers stand for, and they make a mockery of the principles that define our state.

In closing, I urge you not to lose sight of the reality of today's proceedings: We are debating the merits of discrimination against members of our community. I have never thought of Maine as a place of division or bigotry, and I hope you prove me right by voting Ought Not to Pass on these bills. But if you do have the slightest inclination of voting in favor of any of them, I would make this one request:

Take the time to ask trans people what their experiences are and believe them when they answer you. I thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I encourage your wielding of that most human emotion: empathy.