

**Testimony by Meredith Anderson, Scarborough Maine**

**LD 1432: An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Maine  
Human Rights Act**

**Submitted May 8th, 2025**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify and thank you for everything you are doing for our community members in Maine.

My name is Meredith Anderson, and I live in Scarborough. I work for Southern Maine Agency on Aging. The Southern Maine Agency on Aging is the focal point in Cumberland and York counties for resources, services, and information to empower older adults, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers to live to their fullest potential. Because of SMAA's commitment to provide services and advocate for the most vulnerable populations, I am here today to testify in opposition to LD 1432 and all such bills before you today.

The Maine State Legislature has proven its commitment to supporting the growing number of older adults in our state. This is an opportunity to continue to strive towards equitable access to services for ALL older adults. We know many older community members in Maine face challenges with accessing affordable housing, transportation, mental health support, navigating Medicare, being or needing a caregiver, socialization opportunities and ageism. In addition, fear of discrimination, stigma and violence further exacerbates issues of access for the older transgender community.

A Resource Specialist worked with an individual who identified with a name and gender different from those listed on their legal documents. While assisting them with housing applications, a significant barrier surfaced; most housing providers require legal documentation that exactly matches the name and gender submitted on the application. Since the individual had not yet completed the legal process to update their documents, there was a mismatch between their legal identifiers and their affirmed identity.

This created an unnecessary and deeply distressing obstacle in their search for stable housing. It highlighted the urgent need for more inclusive practices and greater flexibility in documentation requirements. Housing applications should include space for both legal and affirmed names, along with clear guidance for staff on how to handle discrepancies respectfully. By implementing inclusive measures, we can reduce barriers to housing, uphold the dignity and rights of transgender individuals, and promote equity across housing systems. Ultimately the barriers with the application process resulted in the client removing themselves from our services.

An older adult contacted our agency seeking support in planning for their future. They expressed their hope, as someone who is non-binary, that we could help them to find an assisted living facility that would be "good for [them]." As they said, a place that would be "willing to deal with who I am." The state's long term care assessing agency, MAXIMUS, had determined that they were in need of 25 hours of care per week, however the person was receiving closer to 6 hours of care in their home. They had previously lived for a short time in an assisted living facility, where they had been placed in a room with someone who shared their sex assigned at birth rather than their gender identity. This situation was hard to navigate, so the person moved out of the facility and sought home care as an alternative. Anticipating an increasing need for support, they reached out to SMAA for guidance. We all want to find a place where we feel like we belong, are accepted and receive the care we need when we are at our most vulnerable.

Gender identity is already a barrier to accessing services we all need. If it is built into law that individuals can be discriminated against based on gender identity, this means that every gender identity can be discriminated against- male, female, or non-binary.

Protecting basic human rights to life with dignity for all community members is a deeply held value in Maine. This bill infringes upon that right. Thank you for your support in opposition to this bill which promotes discrimination and prohibits older adults from aging with dignity.

I'm happy to answer or find the answer to any questions you may have.

Meredith Anderson, LCSW

207-396-6576