

**Testimony of Suzanne Saucier**

*In Opposition to LD 233, LD 868, and LD 1002*

**Judiciary Committee – Maine Legislature | May 8, 2025**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee today.

My name is Suzanne Saucier. As both an educator and a proud parent of a trans teen, I am here to strongly oppose the bills before you.

These bills discriminate. They restrict participation in school sports, deny access to gender-appropriate facilities, and enforce harmful naming and gender identification policies, without proper protections. They are not based on evidence, but fear, and they risk serious harm to students' mental health and safety. Ultimately, these bills send a harmful message that transgender students don't belong, creating real damage while offering no meaningful solutions.

Jacob's father and I are lucky enough to participate in HIS journey. I emphasize HIS because that is who it ultimately belongs to, Jacob. He is here today because he was given the support and the love to thrive. When Jacob transitioned in 8th grade, he had to change schools due to peers threatening him, and calling him names like a fag or queer regularly. If you find these words repulsive or offensive to be repeated in this room, I know I have your attention. Imagine being a child who hears these words, and worse, every day.

Those who are to blame struggle with accepting differences. Rather than choosing empathy and understanding, they respond with fear, judgment, or rejection. It's this unwillingness to embrace diversity, to see the humanity in people who may not look, act, or identify the same way, that fuels discrimination and exclusion. The problem isn't the institution itself, but the individuals who resist change and perpetuate harm by refusing to recognize the basic rights and dignity of others.

Jacob played field hockey in 8th and 9th grade and found belonging through the support of his team and school. His gender identity on the field didn't define him—he was simply a teammate, thriving in the inclusive spirit of the game, much like many of us once did.

Lastly, regarding the bills that would restrict bathroom access. Jacob, a straight-A student and active participant in school life, avoided using the bathroom for up to 9 hours a day in high school. His anxiety was always: "What if?" and his fears were always: "What if they don't understand?" He knew his assignment was to use the bathroom to poop or pee, but his question was "did they know the assignment"? It never was about harming others, but about whether others understood that he, like everyone else, just needed to use the bathroom.

These bills won't make schools safer. They'll make them more hostile. Transgender students already face elevated risks of bullying and violence. What they need is support, not exclusion.

I stand here before you, a parent who is terrified for my child. I urge you, I need you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these harmful bills. Help me keep my child safe. Thank you.