

May 8, 2025, Augusta, Maine Public Testimony before the Judiciary Committee of the Maine State Legislature, by David A. Weeda, a U.S. citizen, residing in Bucksport, Maine.

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

My name is David A. Weeda, and I have been a resident citizen of Bucksport, Maine, since October of 2003. I am here today to speak in firm opposition to all 8 bills this Committee is looking at today; LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704 -- in your 9:30 a.m. session, LD 1337 and LD 1432 -- in your 1 p.m. session, And LD 380 -- in your 3 p.m. session.

I am an openly gay cis gendered man, and at age 66, am able to reflect on over 45 years of advocacy and engaged public activism for the LGBTQIA+ community.

I have witnessed many gains and losses over those years, and I am no stranger to the community-jubilation that comes with a legislative or electoral victory, or the heartbreaking sadness and community trauma which accompany the defeats.

An integral part of our shared humanity is the notion that we all crave a sense of belonging as well as a feeling of being "seen" in our authentic identity. Young people, in particular, need to feel safe and nurtured as they become aware of their identity and how they might fit into our world as they mature.

Homophobia and transphobia harm us all. LGBTQIA+ people are real. We have always been authentic members of our diverse human family, and any legislation which seeks to deny our existence or full participation in our culture is unwarranted and cruel. Trans people are authentically fulfilling their personal destinies, and deserve every opportunity to participate in our culture as they express their authentic gender-identity.

Our public schools have a particularly important role to play in a process which should allow all young people to joyfully and confidently embrace their identities. Relevant resources which provide authentic, honest support should be available for any student who seeks them out. The notion of prohibiting authentic acknowledgment and honest conversation around human sexuality, our diversity in gender expression and sexual orientation, is unhealthy, dishonest and divisive.

The goal of my advocacy and activism for the LGBTQIA+ community has always been to make life safer, happier and more fulfilling for the next generation. The eight bills in front of your Committee today are mean-spirited, and seek to further marginalize and harm our vulnerable transgender members of our human family.

Thank you.