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LD 254

Good afternoon Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the joint standing committee on education and cultural affairs.

My name is Alex Wu. I am a junior at Scarborough High School, and also a youth council member for Maine Boys to Men, an organization hoping to stop date rape violence, and sexual violence in Maine through a consent based curriculum.

Consent education has made a huge impact on my life. I have not yet been in a romantic relationship. Regardless of the drafted legislation, I am sure that consent education has improved my quality of life by encouraging me to set healthy boundaries in all of my relationships.

However, that is not why I am here. I think consent is an important curricular piece for all students, especially those identifying male. 91% of victims of sexual assault are female, and 99% of perpetrators are male. It is important that we base consent education not just on setting boundaries, but accepting them, especially with the quite frankly toxic socialization that many young men receive regarding relationships and masculinity as a whole.

My school, because of organizations like Maine Boys to Men, and also the work of previous students in Reducing Sexism and Violence Program Club (of which I am currently an officer) has a consent curriculum. I concede that I think that many of the boys that have gone through this curriculum have not internalized this curriculum, but I think the more we talk about sexual violence its prevention, the closer we will be to ending it in society as a whole.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.