

Sampson Spadafore
Westbrook
LD 227

Dear Co-Chairs Bailey and Perry, and esteemed members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts on this bill. My name is Sampson Spadafore. I'm a trans masculine person in Maine and I ask that you support LD 227, An Act Regarding Health Care in Maine.

I came out as trans 8 years ago. I was in college. I was terrified. I knew that my life was going to change dramatically by coming out as a trans man but I didn't realize how much things would change in the next several years to come.

When I first came out, there wasn't a huge public knowledge that trans people even existed. In fact, most of my exposure to trans people solely included negative portrayals of trans women. Trans men or trans masculine people were not on my radar at all. Certainly not in the public eye either.

That was terrifying for me. I had very little to go off of for what my journey would look like, very little positive representation except for a few trans men on youtube who shared about their transition.

Just before I decided to come out, I was hospitalized for being suicidal. Not living my life as I felt on the inside was a death sentence for me.

What is happening in other states like Texas, Florida, Kansas, Utah... It's a death sentence for Trans people. Not only for the fact that they are making it impossible to access healthcare, but also because it is increasing the real life violence happening in the streets, in bathrooms, in schools, in medical settings and in workplaces.

Trans youth are so, so brave for still living their lives in the fullest sense in these incredibly hostile environments. Nex Benedict, a 16-year old Choctaw student who identified as genderfluid, should still be alive today. Oklahoma state officials will not own up to the facts of the matter; their laws and anti-trans sentiments are breeding hate and murdering trans people.

What kind of society do Mainers want to live in? Do we want to live in a society that allows kids of all gender identities the chance to express themselves with safety and dignity? Do we want our kids to be able to get an education free from discrimination and harassment? Do we want a society where children encourage their peers to live authentically and are curious to learn about each other's truths? Do we want a society where all people are welcomed with open arms?

I know I do. And I sincerely hope this legislative body wants the same. By passing this bill, we are not only supporting trans people from other states who desperately need safety, but also sharing a strong message to Mainers that from the top down, we care about trans folks' well being, the providers who dedicated their lives to keeping their patients healthy, and our allies who support us. I encourage you to vote in the affirmative on LD 227. Thank you for your time.