

Lauren Abrami
Cape Elizabeth, ME
5/7/25

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee.

My name is Lauren Abrami, and my wife Elizabeth and I live in Cape Elizabeth, ME with our one-year-old daughter. As a mother and a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I am writing in heartfelt opposition to the bills before the committee today.

Voting no on these bills is important to me because I was a gay child raised in a time when being gay was seen as being bad, wrong and a choice. I grew up playing sports throughout my entire childhood - soccer, basketball, field hockey and if I had dared to share that I was gay, I would have been considered a "threat" to my peers because I was a gay girl in a straight locker room. While all of these hurtful policies at the time were swirling around in the political conversation saying I was a threat, and trying to deny my existence, I was simply trying to exist. I was a scared, vulnerable 10, 13, 15-year-old kid just trying to be who I was, trying to fit in, and trying to participate in activities that would allow me to be myself and have fun.

25 years later, we're using the same rhetoric to talk about gender identity. When we tell trans youth that gender identity isn't "real", when we try to erase them from our human rights documents" when we say they're a threat to the "the safety and protection of our children", it's actually the same rhetoric that's been used throughout history for all sorts of different groups we've tried to discriminate against. There were times in our history when women weren't allowed to use public bathrooms because it was considered "unsafe". There was a time when black people weren't allowed to share bathrooms with white people because it was considered "unsafe". Or when people were afraid of sharing a restroom with gay people. We look back now and see how unfounded these fears were and yet, it's this same line of thinking that's still being used to deny trans children their basic rights to play sports, or use the same bathrooms.

Being raised in an environment that's hostile to who you authentically are doesn't make those around you safer, it just makes you hate yourself more. We don't hear stories in the news of trans kids harming other kids, but we do hear stories of them harming themselves. Trans children are at the most risk of suicide than any other group of children and that is because they live in a world that tell them they are wrong. And each of these policies just reinforces that message. I spent the first 23 years of my life hiding who I was and hating myself for being something that I had no control over.

Gay children and trans children are not a threat. They are not to be feared. They are not to be erased. They are beautiful kids, doing their very best to simply be who they are. The best thing we can do as adults is allow them to be that.

Our policies matter. They send a message. What message do we want them to send? The message we send if we keep these protections is that all of our children in this state matter and

Lauren Abrami
Cape Elizabeth, ME
5/7/25

we want them to be who they are. The message we send if these bills pass is that our trans children are bad and wrong and don't deserve to be protected.

None of us who aren't trans can fully understand a trans child's experience or any person's experience for that matter. But that doesn't make their existence and experience any less true. Just because I may not fully get someone's experience doesn't mean I'm going to deny them the right to exist or the right to protections under the law.

The solution is simple. Let's keep our protections in place for these children and simply let them be themselves. Simply let them be kids. That's my ask. And if we can embrace these students vs isolate them, *that's* where we do the most good. Sports and school are where our youth spend most of their time. Let's let them enjoy it.

The state of Maine has done a beautiful job leading the nation in voting to protecting our citizens and our young people. My ask is that we continue to be that beacon. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

All the best,

Lauren