

Shlomit Auciello ~ 192 Main Street, Apt. 302 ~ Thomaston, Knox County,
Maine ~ May 8, 2025

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

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Shlomit Auciello. I am a resident of Thomaston. I write in opposition of the bills before the committee May 8. I was disappointed to see that Sen. David G. Haggan (R-Penobscot) and Representatives Adam R. Lee (D-Auburn), Dylan R. Pugh (D-Portland), Jennifer L. Poirier (R-Skowhegan), and Aaron M. Dana (the Passamaquoddy Tribe) were not present for the second half of the testimony given for the 9:50 am session, where I was present.

My youngest child is now 35 years old. While a student in Warren and Union, my child was often subjected to harassment for simply being different. Born with a male appearance, my child preferred to play dress-up over sports. Still, we urged participation in Cub Scouts and sports teams. By middle school it was clear that this was not your usual husky Maine boy, and the other kids made no effort to hide their disdain. As a closeted transgender female, our child was unsafe in school bathrooms, forced to be among and subjected to, the behaviors of so-called "normal" boys who sought to bully anyone who did not conform to the gender assumptions of our culture. Counseling was supportive but a large part of our child's problems came from the behavior of peers, teachers, and other parents. We withdrew our child from school for the last half of middle school to, at great expense, transfer to a private high school. Half of the tuition was paid by our hardworking child, from summer jobs, and a less judgmental school gets the credit, that could have belonged to the Maine public schools, for educating this good citizen.

As a teenager, our child flourished academically in a more tolerant environment, but still found social relationships difficult. When she was 22, our daughter came out to us as transgender. I will not pretend that this was easy for me to understand. All four members of our family have been guided by love and humility in this journey. Because we never turned our backs on one another, we grew as a family and in our social and civic lives.

We, in Maine, speak of a "brain drain" - of a loss of young adults to other states. Maine almost lost our daughter to the cities beyond our borders. Fortunately, over time much of Knox County has become tolerant of difference and, instead of seeing this well-paid software engineer settle away, is home to a newly-built house (and the revenue from its property taxes, as well as an active community volunteer who pays substantial income taxes and spends a significant portion of her six-figure income shopping locally. Today, Maine has an opportunity to welcome those whose lives are differently patterned rather than hide from the complicated realities of contemporary life.

This leads me to a more general point. Life in the 21st century often seems to move so quickly that all we can do is react. Our relatively new reliance on social media and digital tools has made us easy marks for those who might mislead us. We pass false information on without

questioning the claims. If in today's testimony, you hear things that sound extreme or accusatory, I urge you to do your own research. If you chose to skip these important hearings, please read the heartfelt testimony of those who gave up other things to be there. Please do not condemn those, who fit differently into our communities, to hidden and painful lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on LDs 233, 868, 1002, 1134, 1704, 1337, 1432, and 380. Thank you very much for your service to the people of Maine.

Shlomit Auciello ~ Thomaston

Shlomit Auciello
Thomaston
LD 1704

Shlomit Auciello ~ 192 Main Street, Apt. 302 ~ Thomaston, Knox County, Maine ~
May 8, 2025

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

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Shlomit Auciello. I am a resident of Thomaston. I write in opposition of the bills before the committee May 8. I was disappointed to see that Sen. David G. Haggan (R-Penobscot) and Representatives Adam R. Lee (D-Auburn), Dylan R. Pugh (D-Portland), Jennifer L. Poirier (R-Skowhegan), and Aaron M. Dana (the Passamaquoddy Tribe) were not present for the second half of the testimony given for the 9:50 am session, where I was present.

My youngest child is now 35 years old. While a student in Warren and Union, my child was often subjected to harassment for simply being different. Born with a male appearance, my child preferred to play dress-up over sports. Still, we urged participation in Cub Scouts and sports teams. By middle school it was clear that this was not your usual husky Maine boy, and the other kids made no effort to hide their disdain. As a closeted transgender female, our child was unsafe in school bathrooms, forced to be among and subjected to, the behaviors of so-called “normal” boys who sought to bully anyone who did not conform to the gender assumptions of our culture. Counseling was supportive but a large part of our child's problems came from the behavior of peers, teachers, and other parents. We withdrew our child from school for the last half of middle school to, at great expense, transfer to a private high school. Half of the tuition was paid by our hardworking child, from summer jobs, and a less judgmental school gets the credit, that could have belonged to the Maine public schools, for educating this good citizen.

As a teenager, our child flourished academically in a more tolerant environment, but still found social relationships difficult. When she was 22, our daughter came out to us as transgender. I will not pretend that this was easy for me to understand. All four members of our family have been guided by love and humility in this journey. Because we never turned our backs on one another, we grew as a family and in our social and civic lives.

We, in Maine, speak of a “brain drain” - of a loss of young adults to other states. Maine almost lost our daughter to the cities beyond our borders. Fortunately, over time much of Knox County has become tolerant of difference and, instead of seeing this well-paid software engineer settle away, is home to a newly-built house (and the revenue from its property taxes, as well as an active community volunteer who pays substantial income taxes and spends a significant portion of her six-figure income shopping locally. Today, Maine has an opportunity to welcome those whose lives are differently patterned rather than hide from the complicated realities of contemporary life.

This leads me to a more general point. Life in the 21st century often seems to move so quickly that all we can do is react. Our relatively new reliance on social media and digital tools has made us easy marks for those who might mislead us. We pass false information on without questioning the claims. If in today's testimony, you hear things that sound extreme or accusatory, I urge you to do your own research. If you chose to skip these important hearings, please read the heartfelt testimony of those who gave up other things to be there. Please do not condemn those, who fit differently into our communities, to hidden and painful lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote “Ought not to Pass” on LDs 233, 868, 1002, 1134, 1704, 1337, 1432, and 380. Thank you very much for your service to the people of Maine.

Shlomit Auciello ~ Thomaston