

LD1002

Hello Again Committee,

It's me again, Marissa Bickford, Concerned Citizen from Westbrook, Maine.

I'll be honest, this bill had me gobsmacked. In this year 2025 to see this legislation coming across our table? I could barely muster the energy to write this. I am tired.

I identify as non-binary. I take hormones. I go by Riss. It's a nickname. It wasn't even that big of a change and it was a hassle. I use they/them pronouns and still when some calls me "she" or "ma'am" it feels like tiny knives in my skin. To not be recognized for who we are or called what we want to be called is to be disrespected. To live with those tiny infractions day after day is to be dehumanized. Before I found community, healing, recovery... I was in such a dark, harmful place. Depression, suicidal ideations, addiction, self harm. and I am not alone in this. I am a statistic.

This bill is so SO dangerous. Do you want school aged children committing suicide? Do you have kids? Do you remember what it was like to be in middle school? If you pass this bill, I'm not even hyperbolizing, you will have blood on your hands.

Call people what they want to be called. It's human decency.

And for the love of god, don't ask for parents' permission.

Do you know how many queer children are kicked out of there home every year because parents don't accept them for who they are? (40% of homeless youth identify as LGBT) it is a matter of safety for any queer person to get to choose who they come out to and when, no matter their age. That means name changes. Some children only feel safe to use a different name at school away from home. Keep school a safe space. Let kids be kids and people be people.

See you on the next one,
Riss