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My name is Peter Bruun. I'm the father of three daughters and grandfather to three baby boys. In 2014, I lost my oldest child to an overdose. She was luminous, thoughtful, deeply feeling—and she struggled mightily in a world that too often failed to make space for her. Her death shattered my heart and reshaped my life. I would do anything to spare another parent the anguish of that kind of loss.

That's why I'm speaking out now.

In Maine, there are currently eight proposed bills targeting transgender youth:

LD 1734, LD 1735, and LD 227 aim to restrict access to medically necessary, evidence-based gender-affirming care.

LD 678, LD 1741, and LD 1856 would limit how schools support trans students and how students express their identities.

LD 1761 and LD 1926 could criminalize or stigmatize families and providers seeking to affirm and protect trans youth.

Every one of these bills puts young lives at risk. None of them makes anyone safer.

According to The Trevor Project, more than 50% of transgender and nonbinary youth seriously considered suicide in the past year. Those who had access to gender-affirming care, supportive school environments, or affirming families reported significantly lower rates of depression, substance misuse, and suicidal thoughts.

Gender-affirming care is endorsed by every major medical association in the U.S., including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association—not because it's political, but because it saves lives.

We know what happens when young people are shamed, erased, or denied their truth. I know what it looks like to bury a child who didn't get the help she needed. These bills don't protect families—they create new ones who will carry the same grief I do.

No matter where you stand politically, we all want Maine's children to grow up healthy, loved, and safe. That means rejecting legislation rooted in fear and misinformation. It means trusting the evidence. It means choosing compassion over cruelty.

Let's not let more Maine families suffer needless heartbreak.