

Testimony Opposing LD 1002: An Act to Protect Children's Identification by Requiring Public Schools to Use the Name and Gender Specified on a Child's Birth Certificate

Honorable members of the committee,

My name is Katie Brydon, and I stand before you today as a lifelong Mainer, a parent, a teacher, and a dedicated public servant. I grew up in this state, and I have chosen to raise my family and serve my community here because I deeply cherish the unique qualities that define Maine. It is with a profound sense of disappointment and disbelief that I address LD 1002.

This bill, which seeks to mandate that public schools use only the name and gender specified on a child's birth certificate, is not only misguided but fundamentally undermines the very essence of what makes Maine so special. It represents a dangerous intrusion into the private lives of our children and their families, and it flies in the face of our state's long-held values of individual autonomy and respect.

Maine is a place where we value our privacy. We believe in minding our own business, not because we are indifferent, but because we recognize the importance of respecting the personal choices and journeys of our neighbors. It's the peace of knowing that our community is there for us, a safety net of support, while also respecting our right to self-determination. People choose to live in Maine, and they choose to stay here, because of this delicate balance between community and individual freedom.

LD 1002 seeks to dismantle this very principle. It seeks to impose a rigid, one-size-fits-all approach to identity, disregarding the deeply personal and often complex experiences of transgender and gender-expansive children. It would force schools to ignore the lived realities of these students, potentially exposing them to harm, discrimination, and a profound sense of alienation.

This bill is not about protecting children; it is about imposing a narrow and harmful ideology that disregards the well-being of some of our most vulnerable students. It would force schools to become instruments of state-sanctioned misgendering and deadnaming, actions that have been shown to have devastating consequences for the mental and emotional health of transgender youth.

Furthermore, LD 1002 is a blatant overreach of state authority. It seeks to dictate how schools interact with their students, undermining the professional judgment of educators and the rights of parents to make decisions that are in the best interests of their children. This is not the role of government.

We must remember that children are not simply names and genders on a birth certificate. They are individuals with complex identities, evolving understandings of themselves, and a fundamental right to be treated with dignity and respect.

To pass LD 1002 would be to betray the very values that make Maine the place we love. It would be to sacrifice the well-being of our children on the altar of political ideology. I urge you to reject this harmful and unnecessary bill and to reaffirm our commitment to privacy, respect, and the fundamental right of every child to be seen and affirmed for who they are.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Katie Brydon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Katie Brydon
51 Poplar Street, Bangor
katiebrydon@gmail.com

Katie Brydon
Bangor
LD 1002

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