

Sam Bullard
Pittsfield
LD 868

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Pittsfield, Maine
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Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for hearing my voice on these issues today. My name is Sam Bullard and I am a resident of Pittsfield. I am a nonbinary person who has worked within the fields of trans affirming healthcare, LGBTQ+ training, and primary school education. I have also been a leading part of Bangor Pride for the last 5 years. Given all I have learned within these spaces, I am writing in strong opposition to these bills.

It is no secret that trans folks have risen to the forefront as the most recent targets of our polarized political atmosphere in the last few years. We have seen a major spike in violence towards trans folks according to the Human Rights Campaign (<https://reports.hrc.org/an-epidemic-of-violence-2024>). Hateful and misinformed rhetoric about trans people continues to be spread through our media and government as a way to fearmonger the public into a frenzy against a vulnerable group. The irony is this isn't the first time we have seen our country turn on marginalized communities to create divisiveness; this is a long held tactic that has time and again proven to be universally condemned a few decades later (i.e. the Jim Crow laws).

Creating these divides and discriminating against trans folks only furthers the hurtful animosity between our communities. Kids are shown to grow up feeling connected, safer, and happier within their community when they are allowed to express themselves freely and engage in affirming social spaces. We also see the reverse happening with discriminatory bills such as these taking effect in other states, treating gender and sex as a witch hunt. Both cis and trans folks suffer due to these shockwaves, as we are seeing incidents of cis folks getting "transvestigated" for seeming too gender ambiguous and young children being asked to prove their sex at birth based on visual assumptions. We saw similar cases of this back in the mid 1900s, where anyone not wearing at least three articles of "gendered" clothing could be arrested. All this logic is based on fictional scare tactics meant to snuff out freedom of self expression and scare queer folks back into the closet.

We do not stand to benefit as a society by villainizing trans folks. We're not invading bathrooms for the sake of preying on cis women (see the same predatory myths about queer folks just a few decades ago). We aren't seeking HRT for the sake of becoming an Olympic level athlete. We are just trying to live happy and fulfilling lives like everyone else. Let's make a positive difference in the history books this time and not follow the path of blind bigotry. Let us be the State that leads the way to a more empathetic and understanding future.

I implore you to oppose this bill. Thank you for your time.