

AdriAnne Cole  
Biddeford, Maine  
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is AdriAnne Cole, I am a resident of Biddeford, I am queer, and I have been a high school teacher in southern Maine for 14 years. I also advise my school's GSTA. I am writing in staunch opposition to *LD 1704: An Act to Prohibit a School Administrative Unit from Adopting a Policy That Allows a Student to Use a Restroom Designated for Use by the Opposite Sex*. I cannot testify over zoom or in person today to support my trans students because I am busy teaching them, so please accept my written testimony.

Many of the trans students I work with, including non-binary students, stress about restrooms. We have several gender-neutral restrooms on my school's campus to alleviate this stress, but the absolute last thing any child should worry about at school is access to restrooms. Not using the restroom at school out of fear can cause lifelong health problems, and creating policies that discourage trans, queer, or otherwise gender non-conforming students from using restrooms denies them the most basic equal access to education.

Requiring students to use restrooms that do not align with their gender identities outs them as transgender and exposes them to bullying and discrimination by their peers. Policing students' gender identity also opens the door to harassment of cisgender students who may not meet expectations for "correct" gender expression. As a queer, gender non-conforming adult who was a queer, gender non-conforming teen, I opted out of activities like school dances, sports, and even prom when I was in high school because I was queer and could not force myself into the requirements and expectations for girls in my small town in the south, either in dress or in behavior. I simply cannot imagine how much harder things would have been for me had I not felt comfortable using the girls' restroom. I want better for my students. Access to restrooms is such a basic thing to be advocating for for the kids I work with, and I am utterly appalled to even be writing this today. This simply should not be an issue.

I want to see my trans students thrive. I want to see my trans students participate in all aspects of school life and to feel supported by their peers, their teachers, their school, and their state. Though my school community does a great job of this overall, I want all trans children to have the same positive experiences in school, and that is why I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on this bill. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
AdriAnne Cole (she/they)