

Brenda Earley
Newport
LD 233

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Judiciary Committee
State of Maine

Public Hearing (LD 233, 868, 1002, 1134, 1704, 1337, 1432, and 230)

May 3, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee: Thank-you for the opportunity to address this committee.

My name is Brenda Earley. I live in Newport Maine. As a recent retiree from 35 years of practice as a mental health counselor and prior 16 years of being an educator, I feel that I have a good understanding of the issues presented in the fore-mentioned proposals. I will begin by stating, unequivocally, that I oppose each and every one of them. And will address them as a whole.

Title IX, a federal civil rights law, enacted in June 1972 states that it prohibits sex-based discrimination in any school or any other educational program that receives funding from the federal government. In 2005, the Maine Human Rights Act included gender identity as part of sexual orientation. That Act was 'amended in 2021 to include gender identity as its own protected class, joining other protected classes such as sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, color and religion.'"-- Thomson Crosman

These are the legal facts. They are clear and easily understood.

In my opinion, any argument put forward to question, confuse, or undermine these facts are attempts to 'throw the proverbial spaghetti at the wall and see if anything sticks'.

I have spent too many hours consoling and finding safe places for the suicidal. I have spent too many tears reading hateful, painful messages addressed to children who are just trying to survive. I have helped dress too many cut marks on the arms, legs, and stomachs of children who could no longer bear the pain of being 'weird, perverted, gross, rejected, left out' because they were trans. or bi-. Every single one of them were clear that the pain of the cuts helped the pain of the social vitriol feel less. Take that in!!!! Bleeding cuts felt better than the emotional pain. Sit with that! Sit with that child!! What are you going to say to him/her?? I wish I could be at this hearing today. I wish that I could look into each and every pair of eyes looking at me. Because I want you to answer that question. Because that is exactly what this hearing is about.

I keep hearing the word 'harm' tossed about. Trans girls (2 of them in the whole state) are causing 'harm' to all the other girls in the state. Really? Show me evidence of that harm. And what do you call harm? For every un-won sports trophy I will show you a hundred cut marks. For every bit of discomfort being on a team with a trans/bi person, I will read you a thousand ugly, abhorrent texts. For every law that cuts away the rights of LGBTQ children putting them into the category of other or less than, I will show you a hundred grave markers.

The Trevor Project, the second largest program in the country to address the needs and prevention of harm to the LGBTQ community, states; "...the past year suicide attempts among trans and non-binary youth increased 7-72% in states with anti-transgender laws."

Thank-you for taking the time to read this. Please take a minute to digest it.