

Pier Franzen
Portland
LD 1002

Pier Franzen, LCPC
Portland, ME
May 5th 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee.

My name is Pier Franzen, I'm a licensed mental health therapist, and a resident of Portland.

I am submitting testimony in opposition of LD1002, which would compel our state's educators to use names and pronouns that cause humiliation, disrespect, and alienation to transgender youth.

In my career as a therapist, I have spent thousands of hours working directly with transgender people and witnessing to the trauma experienced by individuals who are systematically denied the ability to live in alignment with their foundational sense of self. I have also borne witness, in countless occasions, to the healing and positive effects of social affirmation and institutional protection for gender identity.

This bill, which would compel educators to use only a student's legal name, would cause direct and measurable harm to transgender students. It flagrantly ignores the professional consensus of every major medical and psychological organization, including the American Psychological Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

A 2018 study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health found that using a transgender youth's chosen name in even just one context - at school, at home, or with friends - significantly reduced symptoms of depression, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior. When their name was respected in all four contexts, the risk of suicide dropped by 71%. This bill is, frankly, a matter of life and death.

Please do not pass this bill. Let students use the names that students tell us are theirs. The government should not be in the business of legislating shame.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on this bill. Thank you.