

Pier Franzen  
Portland  
LD 1432

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 am a clinically licensed mental health professional, and a resident of Portland. I specialize in working with the LGBTQ+ community, including many transgender clients, and I am also a transgender person myself.

I am here to voice my strong opposition to the attempt to remove gender identity from the Maine Human Rights Act.

In my work each day I hear the same themes on repeat: chronic fear of, as well as lived realities of, discrimination against transgender people in employment, housing, healthcare, and public life.

Our society treats the existence of transgender people as a political issue when it is in fact a matter of basic humanity. Removing these protections would signal to transgender people in Maine that they not equal in the eyes of their state and not protected. I cannot overstate the fear that bills such as these create in the hearts and minds of individuals.

Research supports my observations: A 2016 study in The Lancet emphasized that protective policies, like those in human rights laws, are critical in reducing the mental health disparities faced by trans individuals. This same research emphasizes how structural stigma - including lack of legal protections - is a major driver of poor mental health outcomes for transgender people, contributing to elevated rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide.

Please, do not strip away this vital protection. Uphold the dignity and humanity of all Mainers.

I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on this bill. Thank you.