

Meghan Gardner

Orono, Maine

May 8, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Meghan Gardner, and I live in Orono, Maine. I am a parent, an advocate, and an educator, and I am here to testify in strong opposition to LD 1002.

This bill would require schools to use a child's birth-assigned name and gender unless they receive written permission from a parent or formal documentation of a legal change. On paper, that may sound like a small administrative issue. In reality, it is a dangerous policy that puts trans and non-binary students directly in harm's way.

As a parent, I know that school is one of the most important places where children build confidence, form relationships, and discover who they are. For some students, especially trans and gender-expansive youth, school may be the only place where they feel safe to be themselves. LD 1002 would take that safety away.

Forcing a student to be misnamed or misgendered against their will is not neutral. It is a form of emotional harm. This bill would compel educators to ignore a child's identity, even when that child has asked to be treated with dignity and respect. It would also out students who are not yet ready or able to have those conversations with their families. That is not protection. That is state-sanctioned cruelty.

This bill also undermines the professional role of school staff, who are trained to support students' well-being and social-emotional growth. It politicizes their ability to respond to a student with empathy. It creates confusion, risk, and administrative burden without solving any actual problem.

Maine schools are already guided by the Maine Human Rights Act, which protects against discrimination based on gender identity. This bill is in direct conflict with that law and with constitutional protections for equal treatment. It is part of a national effort to chip away at the rights of transgender people by targeting children first.

LD 1002 is not about safety or clarity. It is about control. It will not protect students — it will isolate and endanger them. I urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on this harmful bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Meghan Gardner