

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 and an advocate, and I am writing to testify in strong opposition to LD 1704.

This bill is a bathroom ban, plain and simple. It would prohibit schools from adopting inclusive policies that allow transgender students to use restrooms aligned with their gender identity. It tells young people that no matter how long they've lived as who they are, no matter how well they are known and respected in their school communities, they must be forced back into a category they don't belong in, just to use the bathroom.

As a parent, I cannot express enough how dangerous and dehumanizing this is. No child should be made to feel ashamed of who they are when they walk into a school building. No student should be told that their identity is a problem that must be regulated by the state.

These laws don't make anyone safer. What they do is create a hostile environment where students — trans and cis — are monitored, policed, and harassed for simply existing. Girls who don't conform to someone else's idea of femininity are targeted. Trans students are forced into situations that increase their risk of bullying, violence, and mental health crises.

There is already clear legal precedent protecting the rights of transgender students in school settings, including restroom access. Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex, and federal courts have found that denying students access to bathrooms aligned with their gender identity is a violation of those protections. Maine's Human Rights Act also includes gender identity as a protected class.

This bill would directly contradict those laws. It invites legal challenges, threatens schools with liability, and undermines the trust students have in the adults who are supposed to protect them.

Let me be clear: there is no epidemic of trans students causing harm in school bathrooms. That's a myth. What is real is the harm this bill would cause if it passes.

I urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1704. Our schools should be places of safety, not surveillance. Let our students learn, grow, and go to the bathroom in peace.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Meghan Gardner