

[LD 1432](#) *An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Maine Human Rights Act* -
Rep. Mike Soboleski of Phillips

Testimony to Maine Legislature Judiciary Committee
Christine Hart, M.A. International Human Rights
South Portland, Maine 04106

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong opposition to LD 1432. As a Mainer, a human rights professional, and someone who loves and supports transgender individuals, I find this bill deeply concerning and am disappointed that the raft of partisan, political anti-trans bills you're considering today are a focus of this body instead of important work that would improve the lives of Mainers. Removing explicit protections for gender identity from the Maine Human Rights Act would strip away critical legal clarity and weaken protections for a population that already faces disproportionate discrimination, violence, and barriers to basic services.

The data is clear: transgender individuals experience widespread discrimination that requires explicit legal protection. According to the 2022 U.S. Trans Survey (USTS), 30% of trans people reported being fired, denied a promotion, or experiencing mistreatment at work due to their gender identity, and nearly 1 in 3 experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. When legal protections are vague or absent, this discrimination increases. The Maine Human Rights Act has long stood as a critical safeguard—removing the term “gender identity” threatens to dismantle those protections and invites costly legal confusion for schools, employers, housing providers, and health care entities.

Young people will suffer most. The Trevor Project's 2023 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health found that 54% of transgender and nonbinary youth in the U.S. seriously considered suicide in the past year, and 86% reported that debates about anti-trans laws negatively impacted their mental health. Removing gender identity from the law does not protect children—it isolates and endangers them. The Human Rights Campaign has also documented a link between anti-trans legislation and increased rates of school dropout, homelessness, and attempted suicide among transgender youth.

Additionally, the idea that gender identity protections are redundant because of broader sex discrimination laws is not supported by legal precedent. The Supreme Court's *Bostock v. Clayton County* decision extended Title VII protections to cover gender identity under “sex,” but state-level clarity remains crucial for implementation in housing, education, and public accommodations. In fact, in states that have repealed or undermined protections for gender identity, rates of reported discrimination have increased, while local governments and courts have been burdened with costly litigation and inconsistent rulings.

This bill is not about legal precision—it is a political maneuver aimed at weakening protections for a small, vulnerable group of Mainers. As a human rights professional and deeply concerned Mainer, I

urge the Committee to reject LD 1432 and reaffirm Maine's commitment to equality, dignity, and the full inclusion of all its people—especially those who are most at risk of harm when the law fails to name and protect them explicitly.

Thank you for your service and consideration of this issue. I respectfully urge the Committee to vote "Ought Not to Pass" on LD 1432 and instead work toward creating a Maine that supports the rights, safety, and well-being of all its residents, regardless of gender identity.