



May 8, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is John Hennessy, and I am the Director of Public Advocacy for the Episcopal Diocese of Maine. We are testifying in opposition to all of the bills you are hearing today, including LD 233, 868, 1002, 1134, 1704, 1337, 1432, and 380.

As Episcopalians, our baptismal covenant calls us to respect the dignity of every human being, which requires us to stand up and speak out whenever the dignity of any of our siblings is threatened — and this is one of those moments.

In this challenging time in our nation's history, we write to reaffirm this fundamental truth: transgender and non-binary people are beloved by God. No earthly power can separate them from that love, and their gender identity and expression are sacred gifts to our church, our nation, and our world. Their presence deepens our capacity for love, justice, and compassion.

Transgender and non-binary people deserve to build lives filled with joy, purpose, and the freedom to thrive. There can be no exceptions or caveats that would justify cultivating hatred or distrust toward any of our neighbors, much less any excuse for the physical, rhetorical, and legislative violence being directed at God's beloved transgender and non-binary children. Such violence contradicts our deepest religious values of dignity, mutual care, and love, and it has no place in our sacred spaces or our broader society.

We believe it grieves the heart of God when human beings make the mistake of projecting their binary understanding of gender onto the complex, beautifully diverse continuum of humanity, which God created, and we are still learning to understand. It is the same mistake we make whenever we project our finite knowledge onto God's infinite creativity and capacity to love.

In 2022, the Episcopal Church went on record calling for "access to gender affirming care in all forms (social, medical, or any other) and at all ages" and supporting "public policies at the local, state, and national levels in all our countries to support gender affirming care."

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We will continue to strive to make that position a reality as we continue to pray for all those being targeted as scapegoats in the culture wars, polarizing and dividing our nation.

Please oppose all of these bills.

***“Gracious and loving God, who made all people in your image, male, female, transgender, and nonbinary: Help the eyes of our leaders’ hearts see that depriving our transgender siblings of the dignity of comfort and safety, especially those who are among our most misunderstood and vulnerable, is tantamount to denying your precious Son a place to lay his head. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the all-inclusive unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.”***