

Emily Jirsa
Durham
LD 868

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Durham, ME
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 Emily Jirsa, and I am a resident of Durham. I am writing in opposition of the bills before the committee today.

I am a mother of two boys and a high school counselor. As a high school counselor, I work closely with students from all sorts of backgrounds. I see firsthand the importance of every young person feeling seen, respected, and safe in their environment. For transgender students, this is often not the case. Many face misunderstanding, rejection, or even hostility — not just from peers, but sometimes from the systems that support them. As both a parent and a school counselor, I know that bills that discriminate against transgender students violate both state and federal constitutional guarantees of equal protection.

Supporting transgender rights means advocating for a world where all students can thrive. It means ensuring that schools are inclusive, policies are fair, and mental health is protected. I've seen how much it matters when a student hears their name spoken with respect or sees their identity affirmed. It can be life-changing. And school climates are improved when more children participate in extracurricular activities.

As a mother, my perspective is even more personal. I believe every child deserves the chance to become who they truly are without fear. If either one of my children were transgender, I would want them to be met with love, dignity, and opportunity — not barriers or judgment. I extend that same care and advocacy to every child I encounter.

Supporting transgender rights should not be political. It's personal. It's about ensuring that all kids, regardless of gender identity, have the chance to grow up healthy, hopeful, and whole.

It is imperative that Maine stands up against the national political agenda interfering with our rights to make our own laws.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills today. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Emily Jirsa