

Testimony Opposing LD 1432: An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Maine Human Rights Act

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and other members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Jess Knox. I am a lifelong Mainer, a father of Black children, and someone who has fought in the past to protect the Maine Human Rights Act — one of the most important guarantees of dignity and equality in this state.

I submit this testimony to express my **strongest possible opposition** to LD 1432, a bill that seeks to strip away explicit protections for transgender Mainers from the Maine Human Rights Act.

Let me be crystal clear: **this bill is an attack on human rights, full stop.**

I Have Fought to Protect This Law Before — And I Will Not Stand Quietly Now

Several years ago, I defended the Maine Human Rights Act when attempts were made to undermine it. I understood then, and I understand now, that this law represents more than just text; it embodies a commitment that everyone in our state deserves to live free from marginalization and have the opportunity to exist in safety and dignity.

As the white father of Black children, I understand what it means to send kids into a world where their rights and humanity are often up for debate. I will not sit by while another vulnerable group—transgender Mainers—are stripped of the protections they desperately need and deserve.

LD 1432 Is an Act of Intentional Harm

Let's be honest: removing gender identity from the Maine Human Rights Act is not about solving problems — it's about **targeting a marginalized community** for political points.

This bill does not make Maine safer, stronger, or fairer. What it *does* is put transgender Mainers — including kids — at greater risk of discrimination in housing, jobs, schools, and public life; signal to LGBTQ+ youth that their state does not value or protect them; and undermine the very moral foundation of the Maine Human Rights Act — that **all people** deserve equal treatment under the law.

As a Father, I'm Outraged — As a Mainer, I'm Committed to Stopping This

I am furious that we are even considering legislation that would undermine the hard-fought protections that make Maine a safer, more just place. I am heartbroken thinking about the transgender youth and adults who are watching this debate and wondering if their lives matter.

They do.

Their dignity matters.

Their safety matters.

Their inclusion in the promise of the Maine Human Rights Act matters.

Final Plea: Reject LD 1432

I strongly urge this committee to reject LD 1432. Do not allow this Legislature to be remembered as the one that diminished its dedication to equality and human rights. Stand firm, as many Mainers have done before you, for *all* our neighbors, regardless of their gender identity.

Protect the Maine Human Rights Act. Protect our people. Do what is right. That's the type of courage this state needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.