

Testimony of Beth Lambert, Fairfield, ME

In Opposition to LD 1432 and LD 1337

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Date: May 8, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Beth Lambert. I am a non-transgender woman, a parent, and a lifelong educator with 25 years of experience as a teacher and school administrator. I currently serve in a leadership role at the Maine Department of Education, but I want to make clear that I am speaking today solely as an individual—drawing on my experience as a parent, a non-transgender woman, and an educator. My testimony reflects my own personal beliefs, not the views of the Department.

I am here to express my strong opposition to LD 1432 and LD 1337, which, taken together, would strip away hard-won civil rights protections from transgender people in our state. These bills do not protect children or families or communities. They represent a deliberate and dangerous attempt to say: Some people in Maine deserve rights, and others do not.

LD 1432 would remove “gender identity” as a protected category under the Maine Human Rights Act. This would mean that transgender Mainers could be legally fired from a job, denied housing, excluded from education, or refused service in a public business, simply because of who they are. LD 1337 would carve out new exceptions for shelters and schools, specifically narrowing access for transgender women and girls in the name of protecting others. Neither bill offers any real solutions to public safety or fairness. What they offer, instead, is exclusion dressed up as policy.

I want to speak from both a legal and educational lens, because this is where I’ve spent my career. The legal protections we have in place—enshrined in the Maine Human Rights Act—exist for a reason. They are there to ensure that people are not vulnerable to mistreatment simply because they don’t fit someone else’s expectations or beliefs. These protections have not created confusion. On the contrary, they’ve provided clarity and assurance—for employers, educators, landlords, healthcare providers, and most importantly, for people just trying to live their lives.

When a young person knows that the law protects them, it sends a powerful message: *You matter. You belong.* I’ve seen firsthand what it means when students or staff feel

affirmed—not just socially, but legally. They show up. They learn. They contribute. And they feel safe enough to be themselves.

These bills would send the opposite message. They would tell transgender Mainers—some of whom have lived here all their lives—that their identity is not legitimate, not worth protecting, not welcome. That is not a policy disagreement. That is discrimination.

Even setting aside the moral harm—and I don't believe we should—the practical implications of these bills are deeply troubling.

LD 1337, for example, includes language about women's shelters and female athletes, but provides no guidance on implementation. Who decides if someone is "woman enough" to enter a shelter or play on a team? What forms will need to be filled out? What accusations will trigger scrutiny? Are we really going to ask educators, coaches, and shelter workers to inspect bodies, review personal documents, or investigate gender identities?

And how will parents feel when they learn that staff may be put in the position of questioning or verifying their child's gender—perhaps even their anatomy—in order to access basic services or rights?

This is not hypothetical. Without clear standards, these laws open the door to profiling, anonymous reporting, and invasive scrutiny. They create new risks, not protections. They turn classrooms, locker rooms, and shelters into spaces of suspicion and policing. And they force educators, caseworkers, and service providers into impossible, often legally fraught, decisions.

Let me be clear: I have worked in schools. I have led them. I know what makes a school safe, and what puts students in danger. These bills do not protect students. They endanger them—not just transgender students, but any child who doesn't conform to someone else's idea of how a boy or girl is "supposed" to look or act.

What happens to the girl with short hair and a deep voice who's accused of being in the "wrong" bathroom? What happens to the boy who's quiet, artistic, and not traditionally masculine? These policies will harm far more children than they claim to protect.

This is not what we want for our schools. This is not what we want for our state.

As a non-transgender woman, I want to say clearly and unequivocally: I do not feel threatened by transgender women. Their existence does not threaten mine. Their dignity does not come at the expense of mine. What does threaten me—and my values—is the erosion of empathy, evidence, and equity in how we shape public policy.

LD 1432 and LD 1337 are not about fairness. They are about fear. And they reflect a dangerous shift away from the principle that has long defined Maine's human rights protections: that every person deserves to live free from discrimination.

If we pass these bills, what happens when someone is denied housing because they "look trans"? What happens when a trans teen is turned away from a doctor? What happens when someone is fired—not for what they did, but for who they are?

Without legal protection, they will have no recourse. That's not freedom. That's abandonment.

The Maine Human Rights Act has been a model of moral clarity—proof that even a small state can lead with courage and compassion. If we begin to carve out exceptions based on fear or politics, we risk losing the very foundation of that clarity.

As a parent, I want my child to grow up in a Maine that teaches compassion, respects difference, and honors the full humanity of every person. As an educator, I want laws that reflect what we teach: that everyone has worth, and that our public institutions must serve all of us—not just those who fit a particular mold.

Please vote "ought not to pass" on these bills. Do not shrink the circle of legal protection in the name of comfort or politics. Stand instead for a Maine where the law reflects the dignity and safety of *all* people.

Thank you for your time.