

Testimony in opposition to the following LDs:

LD 233 “An Act to Prohibit Biological Males from Participating in School Athletic Programs and Activities Designated for Females When State Funding Is Provided to the School”

LD 868 “An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools”

LD 1002 “An Act to Protect Children's Identification by Requiring Public Schools to Use the Name and Gender Specified on a Child's Birth Certificate”

LD 1134 “An Act to Prohibit Males from Participating in Female Sports or Using Female Facilities”

LD 1704 “An Act to Prohibit a School Administrative Unit from Adopting a Policy That Allows a Student to Use a Restroom Designated for Use by the Opposite Sex”

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as an individual and not as a member of any group or organization.

I am a parent and a grandparent. I am also a retired educator who devoted over 43 years to the profession and I have always believed that public education, our educators, our students, and all our children are a priority deserving of our state's strongest support.

I also believe that each of us deserves fair and equitable treatment. Each of us deserves respect. And each student needs to feel included and supported in order for them to learn to the best of their ability and have the opportunity to receive the quality education they deserve.

Whether intentional or not, whether expressed explicitly or not, it seems that at least some of those who support these proposals do not believe that each of us deserves fair and equitable treatment, that each student is deserving of being included and supported—they seem not to believe that each and every student is deserving of the same opportunities. They may state they have ‘nothing against’ a person who identifies as other than ‘strictly male’ or ‘strictly female’. But any of these bills, if passed, clearly would result in actions being taken against anyone who is transgender or non-conforming. Not only would this be grossly unfair and inequitable; it would cause great harm to individuals who, regretfully, already are marginalized by others in our society.

Additionally, if LD 1002 were to pass, would using nicknames be prohibited? In a world language classroom where often students adopt a name in the language they are learning for use in that class, would that be prohibited? I can't imagine how educators would be able to comply with what LD 1002 proposes.

These proposals address a problem that really doesn't exist. Some who support the proposals may have an unfounded fear of anyone who is non-conforming. The proposals were brought about as a continuing effort to deepen the divide in our state and in our country. They would serve to increase the real fear and harm that people who already feel vulnerable and are marginalized experience, rather than promote everyone's safety and sense of belonging.

I urge you to vote ‘ought NOT to pass’ on all of these measures.

Thank you.

Grace Leavitt
Raymond, ME