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Portland, Maine

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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee, Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee. My testimony is in opposition to the bills before the committee today.

As the proud father of a transgender athlete, I'd like you to understand the impact that enacting these laws will have on the most vulnerable children in our state. Throughout high school, my daughter struggled with anxiety, depression and overwhelming suicidal thoughts. I can't count the number of nights my wife or I spent in the ER with her after a suicide attempt or other crisis. And this was **with** the support of her family, school, teammates, healthcare providers and our state's laws. If she also had to face the injustices that these bills propose, I doubt she would have survived high school.

By affirming her name and identity, her providers, the Maine Principals Association, teachers and classmates provided her with more relief from her mental health struggles than most of the drugs that doctors prescribed. Practicing with her team gave her a tight group of friends that supported her, no matter what. Additionally, access to a bathroom is a basic right required to handle our bodily functions and poses zero threat to others. Segregating an entire group of people from using a bathroom feels like a modern Jim Crow law. These proposed laws are inhumane and dangerous to the well-being of Mainers.

Specific to LD380, the day that my daughter started taking hormones may have been the happiest day of her life to that point and one that we still celebrate today. It marked the beginning of a long road to being the strong, smart and successful young woman she is today. Access to these drugs is critical to my daughter's long term health and by age 16, she and her doctors knew she needed them. My opinion on the matter was not relevant.

Losing access to any of the resources afforded to my daughter could have lead to a very different outcome. I hope you'll take time to consider the value of a child's life when you consider these bills. Thank you for the opportunity to share my views with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought **not** to Pass" on the bills. Thank you.