

Gabrielle McSherry
Monroe
LD 1704

Gabrielle McSherry
Monroe, 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 name is Gabrielle McSherry, I am a resident of Monroe, and I have been a resident of Waldo county for over ten years.

I am here today in opposition of the bills before the committee today.

In reference to bills: LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704

These bills would negatively impact my life and the lives of my community as a queer femme. This bills aim to harm transgender people. They deny transgender students the freedom to be themselves, create an environment where they are unsafe, segregated from the same experiences their peers are allowed to have, segregated from building spaces/facilities, and denied the same rights that other students have access to. These bills will create an environment not only of hate, abuse, bullying, harassment, and harm to transgender students, but because at the core of transphobia is misogyny, it will negatively impact all students and all girl students. It is not the role of the state to dictate someone else's gender or their experience of their body and implement and force schools to participate in surveilling and controlling the mobility and existence of transgender girls or boys. Enforcing people to live in a world; codified by state law, that there are two biological sexes is forcing people to live in a world that enforces stories that are not even backed by science! The body is neither male nor female.

Over history the location or the idea of what determines one's sex has shifted many, many times, because science continues to understand that assigning and determining biological sex in the binary of male & female is a fallacy that does not align with what is actually happening in the human body. Not allowing students to self-determine their name, gender, and pronouns unless a parent gives written permission, denies young people autonomy. Giving this control and power to parents does not make students safe. It increases the likelihood that parents who do not approve of their child's gender experience will force them to live by a name and pronoun that is very gender dysphoric increasing mental health. LGBTQ+ youth are more than 4X more likely to attempt suicide. Youth homelessness disproportionately affects LGBTQ+ youth. LGBTQ+ young people are 120% more likely to experience homelessness than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. This means that transgender youth are being forced out of their homes due to their identities. Schools should be safe places and safe havens for young people away from the harms and abuses of their parents and the culture at large.

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