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LD 1134

May 8, 2025

Good morning Chairs Senator Carne and Representative Kuhn, Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Kelly Merrill and I serve as the Co-Chair of the Maine Green Independent Party. Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today in opposition to LD 1134, “An Act to Prohibit Males from Participating in Female Sports or Using Female Facilities”

I have provided testimony opposing bans to trans students in sports. I will focus my testimony now on proposed bathroom bans. Bathroom bans not only are discriminatory, they contribute to a hostile climate of scrutiny and harassment that endangers the health of trans students and criminalizes them.

I do have safety concerns with regard to these bills, and none of them around cisgender students with regard to trans students using facilities that align with their gender identity. My concerns are around the well-being of trans students whose health outcomes suffer as a consequence of such discrimination and hostility. I am concerned with the community that experiences outsized rates of violence and suicide.

Fostering a supportive environment for trans students and educating our youth on the spectrum of gender and sexuality might mitigate the hatred and fear experienced by trans women, who are 4 times more likely than cisgender women to suffer a violent assault, and the overwhelming majority of those who suffered such assaults considered those attacks hate crimes. We set the stage in our schools. I’ve thought a lot this week about Nex Benedict.

Let students use the bathrooms that align with their gender identity and teach children that fellow humans deserve dignity and respect.

Policies have consequences. What an easy thing it is to allow children to use the bathroom that aligns with their gender identity. What a huge reduction in harm compared to the attacks on trans rights presented today. We decided this matter a decade ago. We don’t need these policies, and we don’t want them.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and deep respect to those directly impacted people who courageously stand up today. The Maine Green Independent Party urges you to vote ONTP on LD 1134, as well as all other anti-trans bills, and as related to this testimony, those proposed bathroom bans, including LD 868 and LD 1704.