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LD 1002

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Good morning Chairs Senator Carne and Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Kelly Merrill and I serve as the Co-Chair of the Maine Green Independent Party. I am a resident of Stratton. Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today in opposition to 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."

This rigid attack on trans and non-binary students is unnecessary and nonsensical, and would have serious negative consequences. This bill is also an administrative nightmare and impossible to apply. So, no nick names. If your name is Robert, then it's "Robert" only. Not Bobby or Bob or Robby or Rob. But we know that this isn't about Robert.

The American Medical Association says that for transgender kids, gender-affirming names can be lifesaving. A landmark 2018 study in the Journal of Adolescent health found that transgender youth who could use accurate names and pronouns experienced 71% fewer symptoms of severe depression, a 34% drop in reported suicidal ideation, and a 65% decrease in suicide attempts.

Why would you move in the opposite direction and cause harm?

We expect these bills to fail. But the very existence. The very existence of all these attacks creates a volatile climate of fear, hatred, and division, finding new and innovative ways to categorize people as less than. Apply the golden rule. Look to the wisdom traditions. And sit with the discomfort. We can do better.

The Maine Green Independent Party urges this committee to vote ONTP on LD 1002. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.