

T. Reed Miller
Old Town, Maine
May 8th 2025

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Reed Miller. I am here today as a private citizen living in Old Town, in opposition to the bills before the committee today, and in particular would like to focus on *LD 1432: An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Maine Human Rights Act*.

The current Maine Humans Rights Act is critical legislation that helps ensure that all people in Maine are treated with dignity and signals to people everywhere that Maine embraces its motto “Dirigo” -- a state that leads.

I moved to Maine two years ago to accept an assistant professor position at UMaine. Having lived in Massachusetts and Connecticut for the better part of the prior 14 years, I had become accustomed to the policies that those forward-thinking state legislatures enacted to ensure that all of their residents were protected from discrimination and able to thrive.

I did not know much about central Maine when I was offered the position and had never lived in a rural area. I do not aim to brag, but want be clear that UMaine was not my only option for employment. I’ve succeeded academically with a doctoral degree in engineering from Yale University, and prior to that, two master’s degrees in engineering and policy from MIT. Internet searches and word-of-mouth affirmed for me that Maine is a place where people are free to be themselves, and the rights of marginalized people are protected. So, I took a chance on Maine, and since joining have secured significant grant funding, trained graduate students to support our coveted R1 status, and earned several awards including “Outstanding Faculty”.

However, if I were among the highly talented candidates being offered a job in Maine this year, I would hesitate to accept, and consider offers in other states. I would pay close attention to the media about Maine and transgender issues and watch how the state chooses to position itself with regards to human rights. Will the elected representatives of the people of Maine choose to continue to embrace their motto of “Dirigo” and fearlessly lead? Or will they be tricked by messaging from savvy national think tanks into oppressing a small, marginalized group of their neighbors for short-term political gain?

The bills being discussed today may seem on their surface to just be about nuanced policies pertaining to gender identity, but, if passed, they have much larger unintended consequences and implications for the state’s economy. The state of Maine is strategizing to attract more young, talented people to support its economic development goals. A 2025 report from [Maine Economic & Community Development](#) on migrants to Maine found that most were from forward-thinking states like Massachusetts, New York, and California. It also found

that over 40% of those employed work remotely - they could choose to live anywhere. Why would talented, progressive, remote workers choose to live in Maine and contribute to its tax base when they see it making 'backwards' decisions?

It takes a long time to build a positive reputation in the minds of many, and only a few missteps to undermine it. Recall in 2017 when North Carolina instituted an anti-transgender 'bathroom bill', it led to a widespread boycott which [caused the state an estimated \\$3.76 billion](#). The bill was repealed due to the pushback, but there was less news about the repeal and many still avoided vacationing in the state for years to come due to the perception of codified inequality. Maine similarly relies on tourism to bolster its economy, and tourists' opinion of Maine matters.

None of Maine's residents can afford the direct or indirect consequences of being perceived as a 'backwards' state which permits persecution of marginalized people.

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