

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee:

First, thank you for the herculean effort you all made in listening to public testimony on these bills. Whatever your personal position, you are to be commended for the 21 hours of attention given.

My name is Lori A. Milner and I live across the river in Chelsea. I am testifying in opposition to LDs 233, 868, 1002, 1134, 1704, 1337, 380, and 1432.

I believe these LDs should NOT become law because they are an attempt to force the state of Maine into compliance with the current president's agenda. They are a direct attack on a small but significant segment of our population, and children at that. Children who just want to be accepted, to find some friends and feel like they're a part of something, whose struggles are compounded by the animosity of people who are not willing to accept the reality of who these kids are.

What's driving this anti-transgender sentiment? "Hate" is usually the word that comes to mind. Underneath hate is fear. Fear of what we don't understand and can't control. That's human nature. I get it.

May I suggest that the way to confront fear is to face head on what we are afraid of. Get to know some trans folk. See our shared humanity. It's not necessary to understand their experience in order to acknowledge that transgendered people are people, who, like ourselves, deserve dignity, respect and the freedom to lead healthy and full lives.

Also study the effect that prejudice has on the mental health and suicide rates of LGBTQIA people. The Trevor Project is a great resource. ("Anti-Transgender Laws Cause up to 72% Increase in Suicide Attempts Among Transgender and Nonbinary Youth, Study Shows", dated Sept 26, 2024, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/anti-transgender-laws-cause-up-to-72-increase-in-suicide-attempts-among-transgender-and-nonbinary-youth-study-shows/>).

Because, I guarantee you, if we let this small but significant population be stripped of their human rights, who will it be next? How long will it take

before someone's coming after you and me? Don't think that can't happen, if we open this Pandora's box. History proves it.

For these reasons, I recommend that you vote "Ought Not To Pass" on LDs 233, 868, 1002, 1134, 1704, 1337, 380, and 1432. Thank you.