

Testimony in opposition to LD 1337: An Act to Amend the Maine Human Rights Act Regarding Female Athletes and Safety in Women's Single-sex Shelters *and* LD 1432: An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Maine Human Rights Act

20 May, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. My name is Izzy Ostrowski, and I am a resident of Portland. With every fiber of my being, I strongly oppose LDs 1337 and 1432.

As someone who previously worked at a direct service, non-profit organization in Portland that provides support to people experiencing homelessness, hunger, and poverty, I witnessed the horrific dehumanization and discrimination that people face when attempting to get their most basic needs met. Trans community members are disproportionately impacted by housing insecurity and homelessness and face additional barriers, exacerbated discrimination, and, often, increased violence when accessing, or attempting to access, shelter. We, as a state, must ensure that our most vulnerable community members can access shelter and housing as safely as possible. We mustn't restrict access to critical services making it increasingly and devastatingly harder for trans Mainers to survive, which is what this inhumane proposed legislation aims to do.

In my current role working at an LGBTQ+ non-profit organization in Maine, I support a statewide network of LGBTQ+ older adults. Within the network, there is a wide spectrum of identities and experiences. There are LGBTQ+ older adults who have been active in the movement to secure rights and protections for LGBTQ+ people for over fifty years. There are also LGBTQ+ older adults who, for a multitude of reasons, are coming out later in life in their 60s, 70s, 80s, and every age imaginable. All of these experiences are valid and important. I have the honor and privilege of working with many queer and trans elders who worked tirelessly and fiercely to enact the Maine Human Rights Act, which LD 1432 is attempting to both eviscerate and erode in the name of stripping trans Mainers of their rights. It is critical that the Maine Human Rights Act is protected as it currently is.

There aren't enough words to adequately articulate just how devastatingly dangerous and cruel these bills are. Trans Mainers already face insurmountable barriers to existing fully and freely. These bills, if passed, will have life or death consequences. You all have the opportunity, and responsibility, to ensure that Maine continues to strive to be a more supportive and equitable place for our trans loved ones and community members.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I strongly urge you to vote "ought not to pass" on these bills and ensure that Maine is on the right side of history.

Izzy Ostrowski