

Sarae Pacetta
Portland
LD 868

My name is Sarae Pacetta, and I'm the parent of a transgender 17 year old. I am writing against LD868.

We left Ohio and moved to Maine almost 6 years ago so that we could live in a state that would, at the least, protect our child, and at the best, be a space where they would feel normal. This includes participating in things their peers are doing without barriers that would make them feel in the spotlight, left out, atypical - especially during these teen years when feeling typical is so important. They have participated in sports at school, and played on girls' teams, where they felt the most comfortable. I was so grateful that the school treated it like a non-issue, and so did their teammates. The rates for depression and suicidality for trans kids is high, and it was critical for us that our child's mental health be protected. There wasn't a negative impact on their teammates, and the positive impact for them was huge.

Further, when we lived in Ohio my nonbinary child received negative feedback in both the boys' and girls' bathrooms. The message they got was clear: you don't belong in either of these bathrooms, and you are not normal. Here, where the social climate is more accepting and schools have done extensive work to make them safe and accepting for transgender students, we haven't had that issue. It frightens me to think about the climate in Maine changing, and my child once again being treated like a pariah for something that is a normal, beautiful, innate part of who they are.

I appreciate your time with my testimony, and ask you to continue to protect this vulnerable population of children in Maine.