

James Richter  
Lewiston  
LD 1704

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

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee.

My name is James Richter. I'm a resident of Lewiston and I am here as a concerned citizen, and as a friend and also a relative of two young people who identify as transgender or nonbinary.

I would like to oppose LD 1704, and all variations of bills that would prevent young people from using bathroom facilities that conform to their gender identity.

I believe this bill reflects ignorance of what it means to be transgender in today's society. First, I understand that gender dysphoria usually not a choice, but stems from a misalignment of the determinants that govern the development of sexual identity in the physical body and those that govern those determinants in the brain, which apparently develop at different times as a fetus, and can be interrupted during the course of that development. Second, many of the arguments for such a ban usually presume that this threatens young women, that transmen will use the opportunity to enter a girls' bathroom to harass and possibly harm the women there. This argument fails to understand what most transsexuals feel about their bodies. They feel their bodies to be a lie, a misrepresentation of who they are, and therefore are likely to be much less prone to "flaunt their junk" than anyone else. One child I know who turned out to be transmale went to great lengths to avoid public restrooms as a child. This is true both of transmen and transwomen. Unfortunately, the general public ignorance about transsexuals, which is understandable, has been exploited by unprincipled people to stoke fear about a small and highly fragile segment of our society for their own political gain.

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