

Testimony before the 132nd Maine Legislature

Judiciary Committee

May 8, 2025

Testimony against all LDs limiting the rights of trans gender persons – LDs 233, 868, 1002, 1134, 1704, 1337, 1432, 380

Chairpersons Senator Anne Carney and Representative Amy Kuhn and Members of the Joint Judiciary Committee, my name is Suzanne Rudalevige and I live in Cape Elizabeth.

I am testifying as a lifetime member of the Christian faith community and a current member of the HopeGateWay congregation in Portland. Listening to some media stations one might think that all members of the faith community believe that gender is clearly divided throughout a life into the birth genitalia distinctions between male and female.

This however is not true. Many Christians understand that gender and sexual preference is more accurately described as a continuum with much less clarity, with the result that persons can feel that they cannot align with the apparent gender they were born into. Why is this so difficult to accept?

I personally will never forget the first time I met a trans woman. This was about 30 years ago; I was a lawyer and I was working in a men's jail. I instinctively called her "she" to the corrections officers - who, of course, could not agree with me that she was in the wrong place. Since then, I have been well aware that gender issues are anything but clear cut.

No one is saying it is easy to accommodate change. Nevertheless, in Maine we have chosen to support trans persons and supported them in ways that offer them a way to live the life they identify with. I hope we will continue to do this and that you will vote against these bills that curtail their rights and limit the way they can exist in this world.

There are always interests to balance, but with such small numbers, for example, of trans woman athletes, it is hard to see why a little more testosterone is a bigger advantage than, say,

another physical capacity like longer arms for a swimmer. Please let us decide to be inclusive and accept everyone as they understand themselves.

Thank you.