

**Written Testimony in Opposition to LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704**

Submitted to: Maine Judiciary and Education and Cultural Affairs Committees

From: Elizabeth Sekera

Date: 05/08/2025

Dear Chairs and Members of the Committee,

My name is Elizabeth Sekera and I write in strong opposition to LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704. These bills would discriminate against transgender and non-binary students in Maine's public schools, pushing them further to the margins at great cost to their safety, health, and humanity.

I bring over **20 years of experience in gender-affirming care**, including 10 years running a Federally Qualified Health Center that served transgender patients from across the U.S. who could not find care closer to home. I now focus on providing gender-affirming care to Medicaid recipients. I've seen the impact that respectful, inclusive care can have—not just in health outcomes, but in restoring dignity and hope.

I'm also a **parent of two children in the Bangor school system**, and I want their schools to be places where every student—regardless of gender identity—is safe, seen, and supported.

This issue is deeply personal. My **partner of 24 years, who passed away last year, was a transgender man**. Watching him transition was one of the most powerful and meaningful experiences of my life. It was a gift to witness someone become exactly who they are meant to be—and to do so with confidence, peace, and pride. These bills would deny young people the opportunity to experience that same growth, affirmation, and joy.

These proposals do not reflect the guidance of the medical community. **The American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychiatric Association**, and numerous others have affirmed that **gender-affirming care is effective, evidence-based, and essential**. Denying it, or denying a young person's identity in school settings, increases rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide.

Students deserve more from us. They deserve a school environment that lifts them up—not one that forces them into silence or shame. Maine should be a place where people can live openly and fully, not one where misunderstanding and fear dictate policy.

Please vote **NO** on these bills. Stand up for all students, all families, and all Mainers—because everyone deserves the right to be who they are.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Sekera, RN

Bangor, ME