

Wanda Stahl
Wells
LD 1432

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to the committee.

I am Rev. Dr. Wanda Stahl, a lifelong Mainer currently residing in Wells, ordained United Methodist Clergy and retired professor from Boston University School of Theology. I am writing in opposition to LD 1432.

I have worked with transgender colleagues, students, and parishioners for decades. I have been blessed and enriched by their stories and their presence in my life, and their contributions to the institutions I have served. Over these years, I have heard many heartbreaking stories of rejection, bullying, and other forms of violence and discrimination. I have also listened to students and colleagues who have been on the receiving end of such behaviors because they “looked” or “acted” like they were transgendered.

The Maine Human Rights Act adopted protections for gender identity in 2005. We cannot reward the federal government’s bullying tactics by changing a law that has been working in Maine for two decades. Giving in on this particular issue would open the door for further attacks on Mainers’ civil rights. Which group would be targeted next? Eroding civil rights protections for any group makes Maine less safe and fair for everyone.

In addition, given the large number of economic, environmental, and health related issues facing our state, devoting this level of attention to attacking a small, marginalized population of people seems a poor use of time and energy.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective. I urge you to vote “Ought not to pass” on this bill.