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To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Evan Suleiman. I am a resident of Portland, Maine. I grew up in Gorham and have lived in Maine most of my life. Most importantly, I went to sober living in Maine and I wouldn't be alive if I hadn't gone.

You may be wondering, how does sober living or addiction recovery relate in any sort of way to a bill about single sex facilities? Well, most MARR certified sober living houses are sex-segregated, meaning men usually live in one boarding house and women usually live in another. Under the roof of my MARR certified sober house, we had to follow a strict set of rules, one of them being no women in the house, which, I think is fair, given all the context and circumstances.

Only a few people in my sober house knew that I was transgender. I was there to stop drinking, not for any other reason. While some people knew, I didn't really care who did or didn't—none of these men were my doctor and none of these men were my partner. It wasn't anyone else's business. I had a full beard, I'd had a surgery, an M on my drivers license, I wore men's clothes, and I was, and still am, living my life as male.

While I can't be at this hearing in person, I would like to ask the people here today—if you had a daughter struggling with her addiction, a very personal journey, would you send her to a sober house where I, a bearded man, with an M on my license, and giant, hairy arms, was living? No, you wouldn't. Sure, I am trans, but people call me sir on the street.

If this bill were to pass, I could be forced to use women's restrooms, locker rooms, and spaces, simply because of what I consider to be a birth defect. Transitioning is an intense experience and it is a gradual process that people deserve to go through with dignity. While this bill is worded in a way that makes people think women will be more protected, it in fact, does the exact opposite. If trans women (male to female) are forced to use men's bathrooms, THEY will face higher risks of being assaulted. How is ostracizing one group of women supposed to protect another? For the women in the audience—trans men who take testosterone generally look like and pass as men and this bill is going to force US into the bathroom with you...do you want to use the bathroom with men? Men, would you like to be forced to use the bathroom with women?

All of you have probably peed in a stall next to a trans person and didn't know it. It's not a big deal. We are not a threat to society or the nuclear family model. Trans people are people who vote and pay taxes. Trans Mainers deserve dignity, so I'm asking you not to pass this bill.