

Christopher Swartley
Yarmouth, ME
May 8, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF CHRISTOPHER SWARTLEY, PARENT OF A TRANS DAUGHTER,
BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
May 8, 2025**

IN OPPOSITION TO LD 1337

**AN ACT TO AMEND THE MAINE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT REGARDING FEMALE
ATHLETES AND SAFETY IN WOMEN'S SINGLE-SEX SHELTERS**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to the Committee. My name is Chris Swartley. I am a resident of Yarmouth, ME and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of myself, my trans-daughter, and all trans-people who are seeking basic human rights.

For 16 years, I raised my little boy and cherished the relationship we had. When my now daughter was 16, she said to me, "Papa, I feel more like a girl inside than a boy, and I'm afraid it's going to change our relationship." I responded, "first, we are connected forever and in many ways that will never change. Second, part of the joy of being your parent is to see how you are becoming and this is part of that."

Over the past three years, I have seen my daughter becoming a young woman and have been fortunate to witness and be part of that deep truth. At the same time, it is hard to see some people driven by fear of what they do not understand, use trans people as political pawns, and try to erase the beauty and truth of them as human beings and their experience. I have also experienced my daughter in substantial pain when she feels like people do not see her as a real woman, and that breaks my heart.

Some people see "problems" with transpeople. LD 1337 is an example. To address the issue of trans girls and women participating in the gender community to which they belong, LD 1337 pursues a misguided and mistaken solution that blames and hurts trans people by excluding and erasing them. The problem is not with trans people! The problem lies within our society that, based on fear of difference, seeks to enforce a ridged, exclusionary, and simplistic world. This world is in complete contradiction to the entire concept of human rights, to The Maine Human

Rights Act, and to An Act To Clarify Various Provisions of the Maine Human Rights Act. This history, and these institutions and laws are predicated on the fundamental inherent value of all humans, not just certain humans. This fundamental right must be protected both because of the inherent value of all humans, and because our world is poorer when we exclude people.

More productive actions with better outcomes would include looking at ourselves, owning our biases and our fear, and working to figure out how to include humans in their many expressions of humanity. It is easy to find communities around the world that include trans people. Examples include communities in North America, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Pacific. They have done it. Are we less capable?

LD 1337, An Act to Amend the Maine Human Rights Act Regarding Female Athletes and Safety in Women's Single-sex Shelters would exclude trans women from human rights protections and curtail their rights to be in certain spaces. Of course trans women should be covered by human rights protections, as should all human beings. The impulse to exclude trans women from certain women's shelters reveals a fundamental misunderstanding about trans women, which could be addressed by talking with, listening to, and getting to know trans women personally. Trans women are women and not - as some people seem to believe - men dressed up as women. Both aspects of this bill seek to separate and "other" one group of women. History tells us that actions like these become justification for exclusion, erasure and violence committed against trans people. You have an opportunity to stand up against this preventable outcome.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "***Ought not to Pass***" on LD 1337. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Christopher Swartley