

Finn Teach
Portland, Maine
May 2, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Finn Teach, and I live in Portland. **I am writing in strong opposition to LD 1704: *An Act to Prohibit a School Administrative Unit from Adopting a Policy That Allows a Student to Use a Restroom Designated for Use by the Opposite Sex.***

As a transgender person, I can tell you that this bill targets students like me in some of the most vulnerable and routine aspects of school life. No one should have to worry about whether they're allowed to use the bathroom. But LD 1704 would make that a daily source of fear, stigma, and shame for transgender and nonbinary students across Maine.

This bill would bar schools from adopting inclusive restroom policies—even if those policies are working well and supported by students, staff, and parents. It would deny local educators the flexibility to meet the needs of their communities and force schools to discriminate against trans youth, regardless of their individual circumstances. That's not policy—it's cruelty by mandate.

Let's be clear: trans students have been using restrooms consistent with their gender identity for years in Maine, and it has not caused problems. In fact, the Maine Supreme Judicial Court already addressed this in the landmark *Doe v. Clenchy* decision, ruling that denying a transgender girl access to the girls' restroom violated the Maine Human Rights Act. LD 1704 directly contradicts that precedent and invites lawsuits the state cannot win.

What's more, this bill doesn't stop at harming trans students—it also harms the entire school environment. It sets up a situation where schools are required to monitor and police students' bodies, turning private decisions into public controversies. It creates confusion and fear for teachers and staff, undermines trust between students and administrators, and ultimately compromises the safety and dignity of *all* students.

This isn't just about facilities. It's about whether we treat transgender students as full members of their school communities. When we deny students the ability to use the restroom that matches their identity, we tell them they don't belong. That message causes real harm. According to the 2023 GLSEN School Climate Survey, 45% of transgender students reported avoiding school bathrooms because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. These students are more likely to skip school, struggle academically, and face mental health challenges.

There is no evidence that inclusive restroom policies pose any risk to other students. Schools already have protocols to address misconduct, and those policies apply to everyone, regardless of gender. What LD 1704 would do is single out transgender students for special scrutiny and exclusion. That's not safety—that's discrimination.

We are facing serious challenges in our schools—understaffing, underfunding, student mental health crises. LD 1704 addresses none of those. Instead, it targets a small, vulnerable group of students and undermines well-established legal protections that have made Maine a leader in LGBTQ inclusion.

I urge you to vote no on LD 1704. Let's keep discrimination out of our laws and compassion in our schools.

Thank you.

Finn Teach