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LD 1432

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May 8, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Raymond Vonder Haar, and I am a resident of Bar Harbor. I am presenting this testimony today in opposition of the bills before the committee today.

I am the proud parent of a 30 year old transgender man. My son transitioned to male when he was 24 years old after several years of serious and deliberate consideration. His mother and I were aware of his decision and were always in full support of it. It was, in my opinion, a courageous step to take, especially considering the possible societal ramifications and discriminatory reactions, as have become painfully evident in the recent national anti-LGBTQ atmosphere, and in particular in bills such as the ones being considered here today. Our son made his decision, not for any self-serving reasons or ulterior motives, but because the basic truth was, he knew that practically, physically and emotionally he was male. He is currently a happily married man, living and working in Portland.

I don't believe any transgender person, male or female, makes this difficult decision for the purpose of domination, control or reward, but simply because that is how they define themselves. To not allow them to do this is essentially to deny that they have the right to exist. The result of this line of thinking became sadly personal to my son recently, when he was denied the renewal of his US passport by the current State Department. This action, and the import and tenor of the current bills before the committee today are worrisome signs of the further erosion of the rights of members of the LGBTQ community.

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