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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee, Good Afternoon and Thank you for the opportunity to share my written testimony with the Committee.

My name is Kathleen Wirth and I live in Kennebunk and I am an educator in Saco. I am writing today in opposition to the bills before the committee today. I have known and worked with several trans people over the years. I did not always realize that they were trans people, unless they told me. My experiences have taught me that trans people are the same as me. They have good days and less good days. They care passionately about educating our young people and put a lot of hard work and thoughtfulness into whatever educational role they have. They are excited about April break and days off but they are even more excited to start a fresh school year each autumn. They have families and pets and diverse hobbies outside of school. They are just like me in that they are hardworking decent people just trying to do the best they can and be themselves.

I teach young people ranging in age from 10 to 15 years-old. I do my best to help these young people learn the skills and abilities they need for life such as critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving information, as well as how to find credible information. Some of these students ask me to use a different name or pronouns for them. I try to remember to do this because we have all experienced how middle school aged students are trying to figure themselves out and that can involve many things including trying out different identities.

The biggest and most important thing I have learned about student learning is that it happens best, and sometimes it only happens, when students feel safe, supported, and heard. Not every student will spend the rest of their lives using pronouns and names other than ones they were born with. And, some students will grow up to be trans adults. One way or the other, my main concern is that they are learning the skills and abilities I mentioned earlier. We don't need laws to prevent something that is a non-issue.

But, we do need laws, unfortunately, that protect vulnerable trans people's privacy, safety, and healthcare. We need to keep the "Shield Law" that protects patients and their healthcare providers. We need to prevent ALL girls from being scrutinized and harrassed. Will every person be required to keep their "papers" on them in order to protect a "sex check" or be able to play sports? How will this be enforced without causing more harm?

I am proud to live in Maine where we can think for ourselves and not get carried away by a bunch of noise and scare tactics. Maine must stand up against the national political agenda and continue to make our own laws.