

Maggie Zall
Portland
LD 1432

Chairperson, and members of the committee,

My name is Maggie Zall, and I am a life long resident in Portland. I'd like to submit testimony in strong disagreement with LD 1432, An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Maine Human Rights Act.

Let me be clear: this bill is an act of state-sanctioned transphobia. It targets an already marginalized community and attempts to strip away one of the few legal protections that transgender Mainers have under state law. Removing gender identity from the Maine Human Rights Act does nothing to promote safety, fairness, or equity - it does the exact opposite. It tells our transgender community members in Maine that their lives, their dignity, and their right to exist free from discrimination do not matter.

Transgender individuals in Maine already face challenges accessing basic needs. Discrimination in housing, employment, education, and healthcare is not theoretical - it is a daily reality. According to national statistics, more than one in four transgender people have lost a job due to bias, and nearly one in five have experienced long term homelessness. These numbers become even more alarming at the intersects of racial and ethnic identity.

There is genuine concern that if this bill passes, these outcomes will worsen dramatically. It will embolden discrimination in places of employment, in rental agreements, in emergency shelters, and in medical offices. It sends a signal that transgender Mainers can be treated as second-class citizens with no recourse.

Our laws are meant to protect the vulnerable, not target them. Enacting this bill would take Maine backwards at a time when we should be doing more - not less - to ensure equal rights and protections for all.

I urge you to reject LD 1432. Do not codify prejudice into law. All Mainers deserve to live without fear, without shame, and without constant threat that their civil rights can be erased at any time. This will always include our transgender community members.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will be pleased to answer any follow up questions at any time.