

Susan Hanley
Orr's Island
LD 2239

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Orr's Island, Maine
Today is Sunday, April 12

My name is Susan Hanley. I live on Orr's Island, and I am submitting written testimony to explicitly oppose bill LD 2239. I am fully supportive of all LGBTQ people, their parents and allies. I want to remind all of us that transgender people have always existed in every century and every society. Under our Constitution, every person has civil rights, freedoms to be themselves, safe and respected without harassment, bullying and abuse from others.

Bill LD 2239 would require all public schools to segregate and discriminate based on a student's sex as stated on their original birth certificate. The bill would eliminate the freedoms of transgender students by demanding they use sex specific bathrooms, locker rooms, and not participate on school teams, walking us back in time where there is already codified law. Also, Bill LD 2239 would remove all references to gender identity as a protected class in the Maine Human Rights Act, leading to an uncertain future for transgender people in our state where they have been safe to date.

LD 2239 proposes to allow, encourage, and authorize a student's family to sue the schools if they are "harmed" by a transgender student in the bathrooms, locker rooms or on a sports team of their gender. We must fight legislation authored to embolden fears, and encourage peers to discriminate against LGBTQ individuals and other minorities, perceived as a threat within our society by some.

I am a former teacher, middle school administrator, and was an adjunct professor of Human Growth and Development with the University of Maine system. My understanding of brain and human developmental research, has made clear that no matter what age we allow people to drive vehicles, possess and use guns, drink and smoke, and vote, humans do not fully develop cognitively and emotionally into personhood until at least 30 years of age.

Belonging is a human need, and feeling judged, shunned, labeled, reported on or excluded for being transgender has negative physical, social and spiritual impacts on a person. In the brain, these offenses to one's psyche are the same as physical pain. By contrast an unfettered sense of belonging improves motivation, performance, and well being.

Difference is not a threat. There is room for everyone. My hope is we all walk in the world as if we belong, because we do. There is no inherent defect in a transgender person. This bill is not about transgender people, it is about other people's discomfort bias. The desire to lord power over a marginalized group is inherent in this bill. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on this bill that perpetuates hate and explicitly discriminates against transgender people.

I have hope in human kindness, development, decency, and justice despite our unknown future.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my perspectives with the Committee. Thank you.