



INSPIRED CONSULTING GROUP, LLC

Chris McLaughlin, MSW, LCSW

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Testimony in Opposition to Proposed Ballot Measure Impacting Transgender and Nonbinary Youth

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

My name is Chris McLaughlin, and I am a Maine resident, social worker, and behavioral health professional with over 25 years of experience working with children, youth, and families across our state. I am a recognized expert in our great state in the delivery of affirming behavioral health services to LGBTQ+ youth and families and am a proud member of the LGBTQIA+ community. I am writing in strong opposition to LD 2239, the proposed ballot measure that would restrict transgender and nonbinary students from full participation in school activities and spaces.

This proposal represents a broad, one-size-fits-all policy that does not reflect the values or realities of Maine communities. In my professional experience, young people thrive when they feel safe, seen, and supported. Policies that single out and exclude already vulnerable youth undermine those conditions and increase the risk of harm, including anxiety, depression, and social isolation.

From a systems perspective, this measure would also place an unnecessary and burdensome strain on our schools. Educators and administrators are already navigating limited resources and competing demands. Requiring schools to implement vague and intrusive requirements (such as verifying students' personal documentation) creates confusion, increases the risk of conflict, and diverts attention away from education and student well-being.

Additionally, this proposal raises serious concerns about the erosion of civil rights protections in Maine. Our state has long demonstrated a commitment to fairness, dignity, and inclusion through laws like the Maine Human Rights Act. Rolling back these protections would send a troubling message about who is and is not worthy of belonging and protection under the law.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that this initiative is being driven by out-of-state influence rather than the needs of Maine people. Our communities are strongest when

decisions are guided by local values, lived experience, and a commitment to care for one another and not by external political agendas.

As a social worker, I am guided by a core ethical commitment to the dignity and worth of every person. This measure stands in direct opposition to that principle. As a proud member of the LGBTQIA+ community, I can attest to the powerful role that inclusion and belonging play in the lives of young people. This measure stands in direct opposition to those principles as well. I urge the Committee to recognize the potential harm and cruelty of this proposal and to stand in support of policies that affirm, rather than exclude, all Maine youth.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris McLaughlin, LCSW". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Chris McLaughlin, MSW, LCSW
Owner and Lead Consultant
Inspired Consulting Group, LLC