



Testimony before the Judiciary Committee

**LD 678: An Act to Require Parental Approval for Public School Employees to Use a Name or Pronoun Other than a Child's Given Name or Pronoun Corresponding to the Gender on the Child's Birth Certificate**

May 15, 2023

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and Members of the Committee:

I am Rev. Jane Field, Executive Director of the Maine Council of Churches. The Council has seven mainline Protestant member-denominations and two associate member congregations who represent 437 local churches in Maine with 55,000 parishioners in their care. I am testifying on behalf of the Council **in OPPOSITION to LD 678.**

All of the MCC churches have roots in Hebrew and Christian scripture, where the foundation of morality is love of neighbor as self and where covenant with God includes caring for the most vulnerable and marginalized of our neighbors, including and especially our LGBTQ+ siblings who are beloved children of God, created in the divine image. We believe sexual orientation and gender identity are a gift from God—not a condition that needs treatment, not a choice that needs conversion, not something broken that needs repair, not a sin that needs forgiveness, and certainly not a category of neighbors that others are permitted to discriminate against, silence, or claim that their children need to be “protected” or “shielded” from.

Among us on the Council’s Board of Directors are three members of the LGBTQ community and several parents of LGBTQ sons and daughters; in the pulpits and pews of our 437 congregations are cherished colleagues and parishioners who are LGBTQ.

This bill is about surveillance and attacking transgender people and using hatred and bigotry to exploit a vulnerable population in a quest for winning political points. They are about denying students’ rights, including the right to privacy and safety.

As people of faith, we are impelled by the example of Jesus to treat all persons with love and dignity and especially to care for those who are marginalized by society. The Maine Council of Churches stands opposed to LD 678 and urges you to vote OUGHT NOT TO PASS.