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2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1440
TTY: (207) 287-4469

Katrina J. Smith

627 Chisholm Pond Road
Palermo, ME 04354
Home Phone (207) 230-9583
Katrina.Smith@legislature.maine.gov

May 15, 2023
Testimony
In Support of

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

Good Afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and members of the Judiciary committee My name is Katrina Smith and I represent District 62, China, Palermo, Somerville, Windsor and Hibberts Gore I am here today to present to you **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"**

The premise of this bill is that if a child goes to school and decides that they want to be called by a name different than what is on their birth certificate, the school then must receive written permission from a parent for school employees to use that name change The name change could be that Fred wants to be called Junior, Susan wants to be called Susie, or that Mark wants to be called Sheila Regarding pronouns, if a girl wants to go to school and have the pronoun to address her be he or him then a note is to be sent home to receive permission from a parent for that request to be honored

I want to be clear to you about this bill as some have maligned its intent This bill is presented to protect the rights of parents to be the sole authority in the lives of their children This bill does not say that these name or pronoun changes cannot go forward, but merely that a parent must be informed and approve of any requests for changes

I also am not talking about breaking the confidence of the chapter 117 statute which allows confidentiality with a counselor at a school I am speaking about a school wide name or pronoun change of which a parent is unaware

In the Winslow school system, just this year, a *schoolwide* memo went out describing a pronoun change that a child wanted This memo however, requested that no one should tell the students' parents because the student did not want them to know Do we really think that if a child changes their name or pronoun in school that a parent isn't going to find out? Do we think a school is a bubble in which classmates don't go home and tell their parents what is going on and then that students' parents hear about it? How is it helping a child for a parent to hear through the *grapevine* that their child is being called by a different name or pronoun?

We, as legislators need to take a serious look at what is going on in our schools and the discontent that is brewing there. We need to show leadership so that we avoid situations that are growing more volatile. We must protect our teachers, administrators and our parents from the discord that has occurred in school board meetings, in the local media and on social media. We cannot keep putting parental rights on the back burner like it doesn't matter what a parent's thoughts are regarding the upbringing of their own children.

Why are parents seen as an enemy to the child when the parent is the one who has known, loved, and cared for this child since birth? What proof is there that the default should be to *not* involve the parent instead of defaulting to involving the parent in life-altering decisions?

I urge you to pass LD 678