

My name is Sam D'Agostino and I am discussing SB 272. I am a Trans Nonbinary person, 18, attending Nashua Community College, and a previous Student of the NH Highschool system. This is not my first time testifying before the NH State Senate. My first experience was back in 2019 as a fourteen-year-old freshman in support of Senate Bill 263, a Non-Discrimination bill for K-12 students that included protections based on gender identity. Since the beginning of my high school experience and coming out as transgender I have had to defend my right to be safe and respected as a student for myself, my friends, and my peers across the state. Five years later I am here to help protect the youth of my community that are somehow stuck in the same position. I will be supporting them today by sharing my experience that could not exist in the future with this transphobic legislation. From early as the first grade I expressed feelings of queerness and gender non-conformity. Despite many efforts of trying to express this I was told by my mother to not express these feelings at school or in public for my safety. The summer before my freshman year of high school I decided that if I wasn't given permission to be myself with support, I would have to take the steps to be authentically me on my own. I knew going from my small middle school of Waterville Valley to the much larger regional Highschool of Plymouth NH I had a clean slate to introduce my true self. I emailed my teachers before the start of the semester asking them to use my preferred name and pronouns. It was not until the open house night that my mother found out I was going by these different name and pronouns. She greatly resisted this social transition, but it was the time I had come out at school, felt the support of my teachers and friends, and the joy of being myself that gave me the strength to, for the first time, resist back and fully express myself. Within a year of being myself, my mother began to learn, understand and support my identity. As a parent, she was finally given the opportunity to meet the adult I was becoming and my coming out is the reason we have a strong, loving, and continued relationship today. If we are to allow young adults to sign up for classes, get a license and drive, influence medical decisions, apply for college, and ultimately make choices that will affect their career and entire future trajectory then we must allow them to make decisions about how they are addressed and feel most authentic.