



February 2, 2026

Honorable Chair Noble  
NH House Education Policy & Administration Committee  
Subject: Testimony in Opposition to HB 1778

Dear Honorable Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Krysten Evans, and I am the Director of Policy for ABLE NH, a statewide disability justice organization led by people with disabilities, family members, and allies. We work every day to ensure that children with disabilities are safe, supported, and able to fully participate in their schools and communities.

I am here to strongly oppose HB 1778.

This bill is framed as a neutral effort to prohibit “personal identity ideology,” but in practice it does something far more dangerous. It tells certain students that who they are is not appropriate to acknowledge, discuss, or affirm in school. It tells educators that recognizing the lived experiences of their students is a liability. And it opens the door to censorship, fear, and punishment in environments that should be grounded in safety, trust, and learning.

For students with disabilities, identity is not abstract or ideological. It is lived reality. Disability intersects with race, gender, culture, religion, and family experience. Schools already recognize this every day through individualized education programs, accommodations, culturally responsive teaching, and trauma-informed practices. HB 1778 threatens to undermine that work by imposing vague and punitive restrictions on how educators can support students as whole people.

The bill’s definitions are overly broad and legally ambiguous. By lumping together race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity as “personal identity characteristics” and then prohibiting instruction or training “in reference to” those characteristics, the bill creates a chilling effect. Teachers and school staff will reasonably fear that acknowledging a student’s identity, addressing bias or

bullying, or participating in professional development could expose them to discipline or litigation.

This is not hypothetical. The bill explicitly allows civil action against schools and holds educators personally accountable under the code of conduct. That is a threat, not a safeguard. It will push schools toward silence rather than support, avoidance rather than engagement, and compliance rather than care.

For students with disabilities, this silence is especially harmful. Many disabled students already experience higher rates of bullying, exclusion, and mental health challenges. Schools must be able to talk honestly about difference, dignity, and belonging in order to prevent harm. HB 1778 makes that harder, not easier.

The bill also falsely suggests that acknowledging identity is incompatible with equality of opportunity. In reality, the opposite is true. True equality requires recognizing barriers as they exist, not pretending they do not. You cannot address discrimination, harassment, or unequal access if you are prohibited from naming the identities that are most often targeted.

New Hampshire's educators are professionals. They are trained, certified, and accountable. They do not need sweeping ideological bans written into statute. What they need is clarity, trust, and the ability to respond to the real needs of the students in front of them.

ABLE NH believes that every child deserves to be seen, supported, and safe at school. HB 1778 moves us away from that goal. It prioritizes fear over learning, ideology over evidence, and punishment over support.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to find HB 1778 Inexpedient to Legislate.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,



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