

Philip DiRusso
Freeport
LD 537

On February 17, 2025, Representative Laurel Libby engaged in what is termed "doxing." Doxing is the act of publicly revealing private or identifying information about an individual, typically on the internet, without their consent and often with malicious intent. This information can include personal details such as name, school name, home addresses, phone numbers, email and address.

Laurel Libby posted on Facebook information about a transgender child participating in the Girls Maine State Class B Indoor Track and Field Championship without the permission of the child or the child's parents/guardians. This post included a photo and the first name of a transgender child. This post drew national attention to an already contentious issue regarding transgender athletes participating in sports. The information provided to her, as she stated in an interview with CBN news that she posted on her Facebook page on February 22, 2025, came from a close friend.

Freedom of speech is a right we cherish and should protect. However, there are safeguards we must put in place to protect minors from harm due to posting personal information online. Laurel Libby is an elected official who has influence and her post on February 17th was unethical, dangerous and a clear abuse of her power. One could make a case that this was done for political gain.

Using children's photos is ethically problematic for several reasons. For one, children have a right to privacy, and using their images without consent is an infringement on this right. Using children's images can be seen as exploiting their innocence and vulnerability to evoke emotional responses from the public. This can be manipulative and unfair to the children involved. The use of children's photos can have long-lasting effects on their lives. These images can remain online indefinitely, potentially affecting their future opportunities and personal lives.

In this case, this child and her family have been put in harm's way. The Public exposure has led to unwanted attention, bullying, and threats against this child. The school district this child attends had to have security at the school to ensure the safety of each student not just the child involved.

Overall, it's crucial to prioritize the rights and well-being of children and protect them from adults who post a minor's information online without consent. LD 537 represents a significant step forward in addressing the doxing of children by adults. By passing this legislation, we can support appropriate recourse for damages and harm caused by adults who engage in doxing of a minor.

I urge the committee to consider the profound impact this bill will have on children and their families and to support its passage. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Philip DiRusso
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