

Susana Hancock
Freeport
LD 537

Dear Chair Carney, Chair Kuhn and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Testimony in support of LD 537: An Act to Prohibit the Doxing of a Minor and to Authorize a Related Civil Action

Every year I am required to complete a course by the US Center for SafeSport, a non-profit that looks to end abuse in US Olympic sports. My training course that I completed this weekend focused on doxxing of minors—a topic that was chosen because it still is considered acceptable by the majority of this country. This needs to change.

My personal experience with doxxing happened when I was at university. I refused to compete in a week-long intramural sports contest. I had thought little of this, as I was coming off injury, and the contest took place during my normal varsity season, and my varsity coach had already confirmed weeks earlier that I could not compete in the intramural event. However, the intramural coach found himself one athlete short. After I still refused to compete, he sent emails with my photo to opposing intramural teams and to my varsity team questioning whether I had any talent, left voicemails for the head of the school questioning whether I was also shirking on academics, and copied me in messages to other universities threatening them if I decided to transfer. Life was suddenly miserable. I got called to the school president to defend my scholarship, and I began reading about myself in online gossip forums.

I eventually engaged a lawyer, but not before my eating disorder flared up, I started having uncontrolled panic attacks, the school advised me not to walk alone at night, and I left campus completely.

It turned out that my school—in 2018—didn't have any policies for harassment of any kind. So I wrote them. While this process was rewarding, it was also hard, as I heard from other students and faculty about their own experiences that were eerily similar to mine. The doxxing of minors undermines the basic scaffolding of trust in communities, and it plays power in ways that intentionally cause harm to vulnerable individuals. Having moved back to Maine, I have been appalled to see this in my own home community by a leader—and again, without any repercussions or legal frameworks that prevent it. We must do better.

I very strongly request that LD 537, An Act to Prohibit the Doxing of a Minor and to Authorize a Related Civil Action, pass.