

Sarah Reynolds
Union
LD 233

Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

*An Act to Prohibit Biological Males from Participating in School Athletic Programs and Activities Designated for Females When State Funding is Provided to the School (LD 233)

*An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools (LD 868)

*An Act to Protect Children's' Identification by Requiring Public Schools to Use the Name and Gender Specified on a Child's Birth Certificate (LD 1002)

* An Act to Prohibit Males from Participating in Female Sports or Using Female Facilities (LD 1134)

* An Act to Prohibit a School Administrative Unit from Adopting a Policy That Allows a Student to Use a Restroom Designated for Use by the Opposite Sex (LD 1704)

* An Act to Amend the Maine Human Rights Act Regarding Female Athletes and Safety in Women's Single-sex Shelters (LD 1337)

* An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Maine Human Rights Act (LD 1432)

* An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Gender-affirming Health Care Services (LD 380)

Senator Carney, Rep. Kuhn and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sarah Reynolds, and I am a resident of Union, in Rep. Pluecker's district. I am testifying IN OPPOSITION to all of the above bills.

Sex assigned at birth does not always accurately predict the true identity a person lives into. Individuals' discovery of their true gender identity and their ability, with the help of medical science, to live into that identity, are miracles to be celebrated. There is no justification for treating any person in a manner contrary to that identity, regardless of what a birth certificate may indicate. As a person of faith, I believe that God blesses anyone who is able to live into their true identity. It follows that school sports should welcome transgender people for reasons including the following:

Athletic participation provides many benefits to children and young adults, from reduced rates of depression to better physical health. More importantly, high school and college sports offer the chance to build and be part of a community. To exclude transgender girls from these activities would be to send a clear message to all trans kids that they don't belong. It would also teach all children that their transgender peers deserve derision and exclusion that can even lead to deadly violence against trans people.

Several of these bills irresponsibly pit students against each other and schools against their own policies and creeds. Schools across the country know that transgender students, like all students, thrive when they are treated with dignity and respect. It's not an either/or scenario. We can celebrate girls' sports and not discriminate against transgender children. We can protect fairness, equity and inclusion for all.

Transgender children are not harming girls' sports. They are valued members of our school and sports communities, our faith communities and our families.

These bills, both the ones touching on school sports and policies and those aimed more broadly at rolling back civil rights for all transgender Mainers, would harm people I care about – people I sit next to in the pews on Sunday, people I work with, who are my friends and the children of friends. They deserve – as all Mainers, all people, deserve – the right to live and express their true selves without fear of violence or discrimination.

I've seen the pride on a friend's face when she talked about her transgender son's upcoming surgery – the realization of a dream for him that she took such joy in being

able to support. I have also heard another friend talk about how painful the constant mis-gendering they receive is.

To deny transgender people full participation in the culture of which they're a part, be it school, sports, work or any other arena, is to deny a part of who they are. We deny their humanity at the risk of losing our own.

I urge you not to allow the erasure of transgender people in Maine. Please vote "ought not to pass" on all of these bills.

Thank you