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Orland, ME
LD 1704

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Lorelei Cimenio, and I am a resident of Orland, Maine. As a parent with a child in public school, I am very concerned about the bills being presented today. I want my child to learn kindness and acceptance in school. My child should feel free to be the person they are at school, and all their classmates should as well.

It was only a couple of generations ago when all girls were not allowed to participate in sports in school. We should never go back. The only children that should be excluded from school sports are ones that are behaving badly. And when those students choose to act respectfully, they can get off the bench. What about children that are intersex? They should get to participate as well. And they should get to use whatever bathroom is most comfortable for them.

My sister went to an Ivy League school on a running scholarship, and my brother is a PE teacher and a coach in Maine, and they both agree: Let the kids play!

In high school, I was a member of the gay straight alliance. At the time, we were fighting for marriage equality. Because of that tension, we had posters for the Gay Straight Alliance torn down. We had students saying very hateful things about our group. I do not want that to be the experience of my child. Excluding kids for who they are, forcing them to use a bathroom they are not comfortable with, or telling them the only name that acceptable to call them is a name they are not comfortable with hearing will cause bullying and disrespect. It will also be incredibly damaging to the mental health of school children. That is not ok. I want to live in a society where everyone's civil rights are respected, and our differences are tolerated. I want Maine kids to learn inclusion and acceptance in school.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills. Thank you!