

Paula Sutton  
Warren  
LD 233

Please consider my testimony in favor of LD 233.

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee ,

My name is Paula Sutton and I was born and raised in Maine and am a former member of the Maine legislature.

Playing sports was a key factor in my development and helped shape the person I am today.

As a young child, I was diagnosed with a rare condition and spent years in a full leg brace. And at night, I was strapped to a bed with weights pulling my hips into alignment. With the help of God and a revolutionary physician, I recovered.

Some doctors told my parents I would never walk normally or play sports, but I was determined to do the best I could. I was naturally competitive. As many adolescents do, I found being a teenage girl difficult with hormones, braces on my teeth, acne, and all the accompanying insecurities. While I was an average student scholastically, I, surprisingly, did very well in sports.

It felt good to excel in something.

Back then, the presidential physical fitness tests would be given in all the schools. Every year I eagerly awaited the tests. I was proud to be the best girl jumper, and I was able to do more pull ups than most of the other girls. It helped me build confidence and self-esteem.

Throughout my school years, I knew I needed to get good grades to play sports so that spurred me to study more. We all know good habits begin young and having an active lifestyle in school set me up to be the active person I am today.

While I enjoyed a variety of competitive girls' sports, gymnastics and track and field were my favorites. I worked hard and made sacrifices to improve my skills. I skipped parties so I would be ready for competition. There is no doubt that sports helped me develop in many ways.

I truly believe that allowing biological males to compete against biological females will discourage many girls from competing at all. Especially, girls like me who needed to work hard to overcome challenges. Why bother to compete if there is no chance to win?

Back then boys would never dream of competing in girls' sports. Men and women, males and females, boys and girls, are different. We can ignore the science, but we all know males have denser bones, more muscle mass, greater lung capacity, and greater upper body strength. Simply put, it is not fair for males to compete in female sports. Women deserve to be champions in their own sports.

I also grew up with 2 brothers and we were close in age. We were super active and we ran, swam, chopped wood, swung from trees, dug ditches, wrestled and more. I know how much different we were, I rarely beat either of my brothers in anything physical. Boys are built differently and my brothers were just stronger. I saw it every day of my life.

Please support this bill and give girls the opportunities to develop, thrive, and achieve true victories while competing against their physical counterparts - other girls.

Paula G. Sutton  
Warren, ME