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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee today. My name is Jill McCain, I am a resident of Denmark, Maine. My testimony is in opposition to the bills before the committee today.

As a parent of two teenagers, I have an up-close and personal view of what students experience every day at school—both through my own children and their close friends. I've seen how difficult it is for any student to get through their teen years and complete their education, and how trans students experience a level of harassment and discrimination in their school days that make this task even more difficult. It is clear to me that these bills would be very harmful to our all of our students, both trans and cisgender, making their lives more painful and putting unnecessary roadblocks between them and their education.

Our schools should be safe, supportive environments where every single student can learn, grow, and participate fully—without fear of discrimination, bullying, or exclusion. These bills will make it more difficult for our students to focus on learning and thriving, without achieving greater safety for any of our students.

Three examples:

- Research shows that refusing to use a transgender student's chosen name has negative mental health consequences. (<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7678041/#S14>, "chosen name use is part of the gender affirmation process for transgender people; this affirmation process is associated with better health among these youth."). Students who are struggling with serious mental health problems cannot adequately focus on their education.
- Research shows that the structural stigma created by bills like these increases suicidality among trans teens (<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4707041/#S10>, "Lower levels of structural stigma were significantly associated with fewer lifetime suicide attempts.")
- Research shows that there is absolutely no link between trans-inclusive bathrooms and crimes in bathrooms or locker rooms (Hasenbush, A., Flores, A.R. & Herman, J.L. Gender Identity Nondiscrimination Laws in Public Accommodations: a Review of Evidence Regarding Safety and Privacy in Public Restrooms, Locker Rooms, and Changing Rooms. Sex Res Soc Policy 16, 70–83 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-018-0335-z>).

These bills represent an additional and completely avoidable threat to students' mental health and education, without any corresponding benefit. Additionally, at a time when our state is already struggling to address the teen mental health crisis, these bills would only exacerbate one of the issues underlying that crisis.

These bills are also a threat to cisgender girls. They encourage gender policing- the questioning of and investigation into students' sex and gender to ensure they are complying with such a law. A girl who looks "too masculine" or performs "too well," will be subject to this kind of shameful harassment. The idea that the state, school boards, or individual parents could demand a child

“prove” their sex is disturbing to me as a parent. We saw this type of speculation, controversy and gender policing in the 2024 Olympics regarding Imane Khelif. Khelif was harassed, threatened, and put in danger by this situation. Her achievements were diminished by the process. None of our student athletes or teams deserve this.

These bills do not protect any of our children or in any way improve their educational environment. They do the very opposite. I urge you to make the choice that supports all of our students and their ability to pursue their education and athletics without also having to carry the burden of these purely political distractions.

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