

LD233

Hello Committee,

Thank you for your time and consideration. My name is Marissa Bickford and I am an involved resident of Westbrook, Maine. You may have seen my testimony on several other bills this session. I am a Queer advocate, documentary filmmaker, after school care worker, person in recovery, and 5th generation Mainer.

I cannot support LD233 and neither should you. Not only does this leave room for the violation of young girls (cisgender, or otherwise) it creates a toxic environment in schools. When schools become less supportive places we open children up to adverse childhood experiences that make them statistically more susceptible to mental health disorders and drug addictions.

By stifling these avenues of self expression for some, we create a weaker system for all. Fewer people will be likely to participate in group activities as they become more exclusionary. An exclusionary environment will invite bullying, hate speech, and other unwanted comments from participating athletes as well as spectators. This will fall on the already taxed school systems to police and deal with and will lead to an unsafe environment for children.

Finally, Bills that discriminate against transgender students violate both state and federal constitutional guarantees of equal protection, LD 233, LD 868, and LD 1134 are discriminatory on the basis of sex and therefore are not constitutional. These bills go against Title IX and the Maine Human Rights Act.

Passing LD233 would reward the federal government's bullying tactics and open the door for further attacks on Mainers' civil rights, but it won't make Maine more safe or fair for anyone.

Many thanks,
Riss