

Jane Makela, Esq.

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

My name is Jane Makela, and I live in the town of Falmouth. I offer this testimony in opposition to passage of LDs 233, 868, 1002, 1134, and 1704 based on both my Unitarian Universalist faith and my experience as the mother of two girls who each played four years of high school sports in Maine.

Like many other faith traditions, mine calls me to work for a diverse multicultural beloved community where all feel welcome and can thrive, and where every person is recognized and treated as inherently worthy, having the right to flourish with dignity, love, and compassion, whatever their gender identity or expression. I am a member of the First Universalist Church of Yarmouth and MUUSAN, the advocacy network of Maine's 26 UU congregations, which supports legislation that embodies these values.

As people who put love at the center of our faith, we are called to fully embrace equity for transgender persons rather than demonizing them and making them a target for people looking for one more place to direct their anger or one more opportunity to control someone else's bodily autonomy.

As a mother, I find this sudden expression of the need to protect our girls against their transgender classmates ludicrous. We have been willing to accept all the other ways in which girls' sports, teams, equipment, and athletic facilities have been inferior to those of boys, but suddenly we are outraged that a student with a penis might enter the girls' locker room? Or that our girls might have to compete with someone with possible physical advantages in strength and size?

My girls played soccer and field hockey and managed to sustain all kinds of injuries, including concussions, from playing against stronger, bigger, fitter or more aggressive athletes—to my knowledge none of them transgender. Perhaps we should be redirecting our righteous anger and legislative ingenuity to requiring better safety or protective equipment (for players of any gender identity) or making more gender-neutral facilities available with individual curtained showers or dressing cubicles for those more comfortable using them for any reason.

I think we could all learn something from seeing how today's youth mostly take transgender classmates in stride and express concern that they suffer emotional distress and much higher suicide risk from societal and sometimes family rejection than other students. For most of today's adolescents, unlike their parents' generation, gender identity and expression is not a binary matter—and they certainly don't want themselves or others to be subject to intrusive questioning or, God forbid, physical examination to confirm they have the right genitalia to join a

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sports team. They have much more common sense—and perhaps more compassion, than many of us do.

My daughters have long since completed their education, but I believe the values with which they were raised and their experience of living in a world where differences were celebrated rather than feared, would have motivated them to accept transgender classmates and teammates and consider themselves better athletes for exposure to whatever competitive strengths those fellow players brought to the field.

I only hope that as a parent, I would have been as wise and compassionate and would have felt as strongly about transgender rights as I do now!

I urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on LDs 233, 868, 1002, 1134 and 1704.

Thank you,
Jane Makela