

Meghan Gardner

Orono, Maine

May 8, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Meghan Gardner, and I live in Orono, Maine. I am here today as a parent, an advocate, and a former athlete to testify in strong opposition to LD 233.

I played soccer and softball throughout my youth and high school years. Team sports helped me develop confidence, perseverance, and a deep understanding of what it means to work together toward a shared goal. My ten-year-old daughter is now growing up with those same lessons. She has played on teams alongside transgender girls. These are her teammates and her friends.

When I think about the impact this bill would have on my daughter and her friends, it's heartbreaking. What are we teaching our kids if we exclude one of their friends because she's transgender? That sports are only for some girls? That winning matters more than kindness or community? That if someone is a little different, we should push them out? Excluding them does not make school sports more fair. It makes them cruel.

Supporters of this bill often claim that trans girls have some kind of unfair advantage, but the science does not support that, and the current rules in Maine already ensure fairness for all student-athletes. But even setting that aside, we have to ask ourselves what we want youth sports to teach our kids. Do we want them to believe that winning is the most important thing? That it is acceptable to exclude or hurt others to stay ahead? Or do we want them to learn empathy, teamwork, and respect?

This bill sends a clear message to trans girls that they are not welcome. It invites scrutiny and bullying, not just of trans students but of any girl who doesn't fit someone else's idea of what a girl should look like. It is discriminatory, and it does not reflect the values that Maine families like mine try to pass on to our children.

My daughter and her friends want to play together. They want to belong to teams that make space for everyone. If we, the parents of those kids, do not want this legislation, then who is it really for? Certainly not for the students it claims to protect.

I urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 233. Please stand with all Maine kids who deserve the chance to play, grow, and be accepted for who they are.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Meghan Gardner