

Alisha Heal  
Kennebunk  
LD 233

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Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee. My name is Alisha Heal and I am a resident of Kennebunk Maine, clinical social worker, parent and concerned citizen. I am offering written testimony against LD 233. I believe all students deserve the opportunity to play sports, participate in after school activities and engage in social connections these activities provide. All Maine students deserve to live a life that is free, safe and thriving regardless if state funding is provided to the school. The primary goal of school sports is to help students become more active while fostering belonging, discipline, self-confidence, communication and leadership skills. For marginalized transgender youth, the benefits of being able to participate in school sports is even bigger, allowing them a space to thrive and belong as their authentic selves. There is significant misinformation about the possible advantages a trans female athlete may hold over fellow cis-female athletes, yet the research shows marginal differences. In fact, data from the National Health Interview study (NHIS) shows that only 1.3% of athletes at a college level are transgender, making the concerns for advantage a non issue, especially for students in K-12 schools. Maine schools have long been focused on inclusion and safety of all their students. Allowing students to participate in sports that align with their gender identity is essential to that mission. Maine has a long tradition of keeping government out of our children's lives and state funding in schools should not determine access students have to life changing opportunities. I urge you to vote against LD 233 and uphold Maine's value of inclusivity and protection of all its students.