

Erica Paul
Portland
LD 1704

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Erica Paul. I'm a resident of Portland.

I am here to express opposition to bills LD 233, 868, 1134, and 1704.

Trans girls deserve the same opportunities to participate in sports as all other children. Participating in sports helps children develop positive self-esteem, provides them with safe activities to do alongside their peers, and promotes their physical health. If these bills are passed, they will deny an already vulnerable group of students the chance to develop these skills and have these positive experiences.

I am a teacher of young children, and many of my students will likely go on to public schools in the future. It is unconscionable that children in public schools have their gender identities disrespected. The consequences of forcing trans and nonbinary students to use bathrooms and locker rooms based on their assigned sex at birth are dire. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, restrictive bathroom and locker room policies place trans and nonbinary students at higher risk of sexual assault. Our priority must be children's safety, which means opposing these bills.

If these laws pass, they will put all children at risk, especially trans and nonbinary children. These laws would potentially subject children to "gender checks" that could be invasive and traumatizing. Additionally, these laws would invite scrutiny of girls' bodies that could lead to harassment and bullying.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to pass" on these bills. Thank you!