

Danny Chin
Bath, ME
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Danny Chin of Bath, ME and I am writing on May 7th in advance of the May 8th public hearing on a variety of anti-trans bills. I am grateful for the opportunity to offer written testimony to the Committee and to lend my voice in support of trans, non-binary, and other gender expansive Mainers. I am therefore writing in opposition to the bills before the committee on May 8th.

As a former educator and Gender-Sexuality Alliance (GSA) leader, I have first hand experience supporting trans and queer students as they navigate their school environments. These students are not a threat, but rather simply seek to exist and participate in school life. Many of their peers face few to no obstacles, and for trans and queer students, they are deserving of this same ease. By excluding these students from sports teams, bathrooms, and other facilities, this legislation seeks to exclude them from everyday life, deny them basic rights and privileges, and bar their full participation in society.

These bills use the language of safety and protection, but their passage will ultimately harm students, including those who are not trans. The vague language in these bills empowers individuals to scrutinize and police others' gender, gender identity, and gender expression. Everyone suffers in a hostile, distrusting climate such as this. Furthermore, individuals can weaponize this paranoia to advance their own agenda. For example, without any proof or authority, a player on an opposing team can accuse another player of being trans simply because they look, act, or play a certain way. Unfortunately, we've seen this type of behavior even at the Olympic level, where unfounded accusations have sought to derail athletes' participation in sports that they love and to which they dedicate their lives. These baseless accusations can be used to interrupt competitive games, distract teams and athletes, and/or provide undeserved advantages. Beyond these reasons, we also lack the avenues to "prove" gender identity. If individuals must prove their gender, what non-invasive and private means are available for them to do so?

This legislation seeks to solve a problem that does not exist. Sports leagues, schools, and athletic associations already have rules for participation. Instead, we should be focusing on making schools inclusive environments where students can learn and grow without fear.

I appreciate this opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills. Thank you for your consideration.