

Written testimony of Pastor Forrest Genthner of Medford, May 8, 2025

To the distinguished Senate Chair, House Chair, Members of Judiciary Committee, and all others;

I write in opposition to LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, LD 1337, LD 1432, and LD 380. I do so from both a religious and a humanitarian standpoint. In Acts 8, Phillip baptizes and welcomes the Ethiopian Eunuch, an individual who was gender non-conforming into the body of Christ. From this example, Christians are taught to welcome and accept all people. Even Christ himself discussed how eunuchs are made that way for the glory of God in Matthew 19.

Currently in the state of Maine, there are two transgender athletes. These children have gone through much pain with bullying because of their gender identity. They have undergone much counseling, doctors' visits, and hormone therapy to conform to who God intended them to be. After such alienation, they have found a home in sports. Now, there are efforts to kick them out of this home. They pose no harm to anyone. I would be completely comfortable with my daughter Phoebe to play, compete, and be in the same locker rooms and bathrooms as any transgender individual.

In the NCAA, there are over 530,000 student athletes and under 10 of them are transgender. For the two children in Maine, and the under 10 in the NCAA, one must ask why they are having a spotlight put on them, when all they want to do is play sports.

Even Republican Gov. Spencer Cox of Utah vetoed a bill similar to the ones before the committee today. His powerful message made it clear: this has nothing to do with liberal v. conservative or Democrat v. Republican. This has to do with empathy v. hatred. I close with the words of Gov. Cox surrounding his veto and echoing his sentiments,

Four [transgender] kids [in Utah] and only one of them playing girls sports. That's what all of this is about. Four kids who aren't dominating or winning trophies or taking scholarships. Four kids who are just trying to find some friends and feel like they are a part of something. Four kids trying to get through each day. Rarely has so much fear and anger been directed at so few. I don't understand what they are going through or why they feel the way they do. But I want them to live. And all the research shows that even a little acceptance and connection can reduce suicidality significantly. For that reason, as much as any other, I have taken this action in the hope that we can continue to work together and find a better way. If a veto override occurs, I hope we can work to find ways to show these four kids that we love them and they have a place in our state.

I pray that this committee finds as much bravery as Gov. Cox and vote ONTP.

Thank you,

Pastor Forrest B. Genthner

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