

Elizabeth Fisher

Biddeford, Maine

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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 Liz Fisher, I'm a resident of Biddeford, a small business owner, non-binary, and a proud Mainer. I am writing in opposition of the bills before the committee today.

Growing up I was able to participate in school sports throughout my early education. I made some of my closest friends and learned how to stay healthy and strong through my participation in soccer, track and field, and cross country. All children deserve to fully be their genuine selves and feel safe and comfortable in their learning environment and while they participate in sports.

These proposed bills would NOT have made me safe and would have opened myself and many of my close friends to discrimination, bullying, and traumatic experiences. I already felt like I had to hide my identity at school and in sports which caused intense depression, anxiety, and loneliness even though I had excellent grades, loved my sports, and many close friends (both in extracurricular sports and outside of them). Even though I had a few other transgender and gender diverse friends in high school, I was the only one who continued to participate in sports throughout high school since I was able to "pass" as female. We felt isolated and excluded – a recipe for depression, self-harm, and suicide in young, vulnerable people. We should want to increase participation in extracurriculars and make learning environments inclusive, not place more barriers on them!

We need to protect our children, young adults, as well as our adult communities by creating and protecting more open and inclusive environments – NOT by going backwards and limiting our rights and freedoms. We need to stand strong in Maine to preserve the freedoms we have rather than capitulating to national political talking points.

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!