

## **TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY LINNEA SALTZ**

### **Maine Joint Committee on Judiciary LD 868, An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools**

**May 8, 2025**

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Linnea Saltz. I am a former Division 1 track and field athlete from Southern Utah University, and I am writing to urge you to support LD 868, An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools.

I dedicated my college years to my sport. My days started at 5:45 a.m. with training, followed by work, then night classes. The sacrifices were immense, but I was proud to put in the effort, knowing that my hard work could result in success on the track. In 2019, I won the Outdoor Big Sky Conference Championship in the 800-meter race. My goal was to do it again and to earn an All-American title before my collegiate career ended.

Suddenly, everything I worked for was on the verge of being taken away. I learned that a male athlete, who had previously competed on the men's team at the University of Montana, would now be racing in my division as a woman. His best times in the 800-meter and 1500-meter races weren't just good, they were the world records for women. These were now times that my female teammates and I had to compete against.

I raised my concerns with the NCAA, my coaches, and my athletic director. While many people sympathized with me, the NCAA refused to take action. Instead, female athletes like myself were told to stay silent, to accept the loss of opportunities we had spent years training for.

Advocates for allowing males to compete in women's sports claim it is an issue of inclusivity. But what about fairness? Male athletes are not being asked to compete against those with a biological advantage over them. Why should women? Being an athlete is not a right, it is a privilege earned through dedication and hard work. The policies that allow males to compete against females are erasing that work and discouraging young women from even trying.

During my final season, I competed against this male athlete in a conference championship. Though he did not race in my event, I watched as he won the women's mile and helped his team place in a relay. I will never forget hearing his coach shout from the sidelines, not encouragement to push harder, but instructions to slow down. Female athletes were giving everything they had, racing at their absolute limit, while the person beating them was being told to hold back. That is not fair competition.

Women's sports exist for a reason. The opportunities I fought for should not be taken away from the next generation of female athletes. We need laws in Maine that protect fairness, so that female athletes can compete knowing that their hard work and talent, not biology, will determine the outcome.

I urge you to pass Maine LD 868 and take a stand for fairness, opportunity, and integrity in women's sports.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Linnea Saltz  
*Ambassador*  
*Independent Women*