

## **TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY ALLISON COGHAN**

### **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,

I'm Allison Cohan, an Ambassador for Independent Women and a graduate of the University of Wyoming and member of Kappa Kappa Gamma (KKG).

In my freshman year of college I decided to go through sorority rush at University of Wyoming. When joining Kappa Kappa Gamma (KKG), I found a tight-knit group of friends in my sorority sisters. My senior year this was challenged when a male wanted to access our female-only community.

After Kappa admitted the man, our experience is best described as a "grieving process," especially for my fellow sorority members with histories of sexual assault by men. These women were now forced to allow a man 24/7 access to the place that they lived.

The lesson I learned, and what I'm advocating for, is that when men enter into women's spaces, they take valued positions, memberships, and opportunities from very deserving women.

The lessons I learned from my experience will stay with me forever. I'm reminded every day of how important this fight is, and that I'm not doing this for me. I'm doing this for future generations, my niece and my cousin, so that they can enjoy all of these things that I got the chance to enjoy and not have to fight for it.

I share my experience today to qualify why it is so important to pass LD 868. If passed into law, this bill would protect women's hard earned rights and spaces. By defining common sex-based words, this bill will help safeguard female opportunities and private spaces from attack by those who seek to manipulate the definition of words to achieve policies that lack political support.

This bill simply clarifies definitions of words that Maine is already using in law, so that we are all speaking a common language. It will give meaning to common words so that Maine courts have clarity when interpreting laws that already exist, something I wish that was not necessary but has proven to be crucial to ensuring women don't lose their sex-based rights. It also asserts the state's interest in maintaining single-sex spaces in order to protect privacy, fairness, safety, and equal opportunity.

This is why I urge you to pass LD 868. It is crucial that Maine law protects private spaces for women.

At a bare minimum, Maine's over 690,000 women are entitled to expect that when public officials designate spaces as single-sex, those spaces are, in fact, reserved for either women or men, not both.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Allison Cohan  
*Ambassador  
Independent Women*