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District 38

To the Maine State Judiciary Committee:

I write to testify **AGAINST LD 233** - An Act to Prohibit Biological Males from Participating in School Athletic Programs and Activities Designated for Females When State Funding Is Provided to the School, **AGAINST LD 1134** - An Act to Prohibit Males from Participating in Female Sports or Using Female Facilities, as well as against the other bills currently under consideration that would function to discriminate against my fellow Mainers who are trans.

I am a cisgender woman who played girls' volleyball in junior high and high school in rural central Illinois for 6 seasons. In the 2+ decades since then, I have played volleyball from time to time in various co-ed adult leagues.

When I was in high school in the 90's, one of the teams in our conference had a boy player (a cisgender boy, not a trans girl). This was initially surprising - we were a girls' team, after all, and while I'd heard of the occasional girl who made her way onto a football team, I hadn't heard of this. After that initial surprise, however, his presence on the other team was most notable for its unremarkability. We played our three games; it was high school volleyball as usual. He was not a stand-out player in any way.

This brings me to my first point. We can generalize about the bodies and abilities of *girls* and *boys*, but ultimately there is so much individual variation in bodies and abilities that it is meaningless to discuss the biological advantages a single trans girl athlete might have over a cis girl, and even more so if they have undergone hormone therapy. My high school varsity volleyball team had more than one girl over 6 feet tall. We had girls that were positively jacked. We had small, agile girls who could set consistently and dig a ball from across the court. Volleyball, like many other sports, requires not just height or brute strength, but agility, skill, teamwork, quick thinking and response time, strategy, coordination, and communication. I do not believe that, on the basis of physical ability, there are sufficient grounds to legally bar trans girls from participating with cis girls.

Furthermore, I do not believe that the presence of a few trans girls in girls' sports increases the physical danger to cis girls. In his testimony, Michael McClellan expressed concern for (I assume) Payton McNabb, who was injured by a volleyball to the head, ostensibly spiked by a trans girl. I would like to assert that while volleyball is on the whole less dangerous than other sports, a spike to the face from any of the varsity-level hitters (girls) that I played with would have caused injury. The risk of injury is inherent to sports generally, and if we are legitimately concerned about head injuries like the one Payton sustained, we should cut all school football teams! To this day, I and many other women in my current league in Belfast play with full-grown, athletic, cis men who unreservedly spike the ball - hard - and we do not feel that this aspect of the game is particularly dangerous, assuming you're paying attention. (I'm more worried about tweaking my back, at this age!) The logic about physical danger has a natural appeal, but I do not believe it holds up to scrutiny. We women and girl athletes are actually not that fragile.

Let's also remember that these trans girls are not, as Mr. McClellan calls them, *men* - they are *kids*. And these kids are *our* kids, *Mainers' kids*. And trans girls are not cis boys, regardless of your beliefs about which gender identities are "real." Trans individuals experience significant discrimination on many fronts, and are faced with extremely high rates of harassment and violence. Title IX was birthed in the 1970s out of a desire to bring more educational opportunities, including sports opportunities, to the more-discriminated-against sex, girls. Currently, this very small population of teen trans athletes is experiencing an unprecedented level of public scrutiny, stigmatization, discrimination, and insult.

I urge you to think about this matter from the perspective of our trans girls. Forcing these kids to choose between 1) playing on a boys' team (which is not only misgendering, but also may subject them to increased risk of harassment or physical violence) or 2) not playing at all, is not in keeping with the spirit of Title IX, as this choice does not offer them equal opportunity in sports due to their gender identity. Including trans girls in girls' sports is NOT a slippery slope that leads to the erosion or eradication of girls' sports. It is a step toward affording equal opportunity to a handful of marginalized kids, *our kids*.

What is the value of school sports? I can tell you what it was for me, and how I reflect on it now as a parent. It is not about winning and losing, though of course athletes generally want to win. It is about the development of the physical body: skills, strength, agility, speed, accuracy. It is about learning to take care of your body outside of practice with healthy food and rest. It is about learning to maintain balance in life in the face of a sometimes grueling schedule. It is about learning to push yourself through things that are hard or physically (very) uncomfortable. It is about developing strategy and quick thinking. It is about learning to put in the hard work every day to achieve your ambitions. It is about learning to work as a team, even when you don't like some of the people on your team, and resolve conflict. It is about learning how to communicate and support one another. It is about maintaining focus and hope even when you are behind. It is about picking yourself up and trying again when you fail. It is about being a gracious winner, and a gracious loser. It is about coming to terms with the fact that *no matter how hard you work, you are not entitled to a win*.

There are only two "out" transgender athletes currently participating in girls' sports in the state of Maine, out of tens of thousands of high school athletes ([Maine Public, May 5, 2025](#)). If your concern is cis girls, when it comes to these values, I don't understand how our cis-girl athletes are negatively impacted by the inclusion of these trans girls, and in fact, I think their inclusion amplifies some of the values I've listed above. And more to the point - do we really have such a low opinion of our (cis) girls' abilities that we think they can't realize these values - and be successful athletes - because a transgender girl plays on their team, or competes with them? As a cisgender female athlete, I find that frankly insulting. That low estimation of what girls can achieve is *not* a belief I want to instill in my daughter.

Voting against trans women and girls does not support me, as a cis woman, or women and girls generally. I urge you to vote AGAINST these anti-trans bills in order to support all of us.