

Emma Young  
Cape Elizabeth, Maine  
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Emma Young, I'm a resident of Cape Elizabeth, and I just finished my freshman year at Rice University, where I am a member of their Division I women's cross country and track teams. I am here in opposition to the legislation before the committee today, LD 233.

As a runner at Cape Elizabeth High School, I came in 2nd place to a transgender girl on multiple occasions—including on my senior night, on my home course. Prior to those races, I had spent two years researching the biological sex differences between the male and female runner for a project that ultimately named me a National STEM Challenge Champion. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't acutely aware of the physiological advantage she held in our races, but it is crucial to understand that *the argument against trans athletes is not primarily about this advantage*. This debate and these bills aren't just about whether trans women should compete—they're about a broader movement in the state of Maine and this country that seeks to dehumanize, attack, and deny the existence of trans people altogether.

Frankly, today's hearings have nothing to do with protecting girls' sports—they're about legislating trans exclusion under the false pretense of fairness. As a cis female athlete, I know these bills are missing the point entirely. According to the Women's Sports Foundation, 80 to 90 percent of all educational institutions are already out of compliance with Title IX as it applies to athletics—not because of the participation of trans women—but because they fail to provide proportional athletic opportunities for women, distribute athletic scholarships equitably, or offer equal treatment, benefits, and resources. If you want to write a bill to address these issues, I'd support that one, but we don't need changes to Maine law that serve only to pursue an ulterior political motive and erode the protections of the Maine Human Rights Act.

People often **TALK** about what it feels like for a cis girl to lose to a trans athlete, but I've **FELT** it. What I can tell you is that it didn't take away the joy of racing. The things I remember most about this athlete were not feelings of being "discriminated" against, her acts of "cheating," or her attempts to "humiliate" and "dishearten" me—but rather our high fives at the finish line, her voice cheering for me by name at track meets, and her steady courage and kindness in the face of deafening controversy and noise.

I don't have all the answers to how exactly fairness should be achieved. But I do know that whatever pain I was feeling at a given point during a race was nothing compared to the pain she was feeling as she attempted to run the same race while having insults hurled her way. This bill and the bills being heard today will only allow for further acts of discrimination and harassment against an already vulnerable group of student-athletes.

So, as you consider these bills today, I implore you to choose *empathy* over fear and hate.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on LD 233. Thank you.