

Alicia Bane
Brunswick, 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 on this very important issue. My name is Alicia Bane, I live in Brunswick, Maine, and I'm writing as a person who cares deeply for the health, safety and happiness of Maine's children. I am writing in opposition of LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704.

I hold a degree in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies from the University of Maine, and so am particularly knowledgeable and informed on the issue of trans girls in school sports. I feel I can offer both guidance and clarity on why these bills would be harmful to the children of our state.

To begin, these bills are discriminatory on the basis of sex and are therefore unconstitutional — a fact that on its own should be enough for the committee to vote 'ought not to pass.' Additionally these bills would leave all of our girls vulnerable to unnecessary trauma — everything from harassment by teachers and peers, to invasive "gender check" requirements to participate in sports, to an increased level of scrutiny to their bodies and physical abilities.

When we talk about gender, it is important to recognize that it is a social construct before anything else. We associate the benefits of size, strength and physical ability to boys and men, and because of this we assume that a person who is assigned male at birth will have a significant advantage against cisgender girls in sports. I am here to tell you that this is not the case.

While there are differences in biology among trans individuals, they do not amount to the upending of a level playing field for girls in sports — in part because the playing field isn't level to begin with.

Biological advantage comes in many forms beyond sex. Some children have wider arm spans that make for an advantage in swimming. Some children have a height advantage that may help them excel in basketball. Some children have longer legs and sleeker builds that may help them run faster or jump over hurdles more easily.

Even things like socioeconomic status give some children advantages over others — a recent study published in the *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education* found that students from wealthier families are more likely not only to play sports, but to succeed in them.

But not all wealthy children excel in sports. Not all tall people are good at basketball. Not all trans girls have physical advantages to all cisgender girls. Hypothetical advantages are not reason enough to ban an entire subset of girls from participation in sports, let alone enough to subject them to the kinds of invasive scrutiny these bills would allow.

That being said, I would argue that 'fairness' in sports isn't even the most important issue related to these bills. What we should be considering is how these bills would erode our human rights, our collective sense of decency and our ability to keep our children safe.

These bills, if passed, would send a message to trans children that who they are is something they should hide or be ashamed of at a time in their lives when they are at their most vulnerable.

The statistics are clear — trans children are in desperate need of our support and protection. A study by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law found that 82% of trans individuals have considered suicide, while a staggering 40% have attempted suicide — with suicidality at its highest rate among transgender youth.

It gets worse: a peer-reviewed study conducted by researchers at The Trevor Project in 2024 found that anti-trans laws cause up to a 72% increase in suicide attempts among transgender and nonbinary youth.

Passing these bills would, quite literally, put the lives of Maine children at risk.

I personally believe that the citizens of Maine, and our elected officials, are duty-bound to protect all Maine people — especially our most vulnerable. Our children should be able to live and feel safe in our state. They should feel empowered and supported to be who they are, fully and unapologetically, without fear of discrimination or invasive scrutiny on the basis of their gender.

Passing these bills would tell the citizens of Maine that trans people do not belong among us, when the truth is that they have always been here, will always be here, and should always feel that this is their home and a place where they belong.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the committee. I urge you to vote “ought not to pass” on these bills.

Alicia Bane