

Kyle Blum
Saco, Maine
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Kyle Blum, I'm a resident of Saco, and I am writing this as an ally of trans Mainers. I am submitting this testimony in opposition of the bills before the committee today.

Focussing on LD 233, LD 868, and LD 1134: these bills discriminate on the basis of sex. The changes to state law proposed in these bills are being framed as a way to protect cisgendered students from some sort of unfair treatment in sports but these changes are unnecessary as Maine schools are already complying with state and federal laws. The correct organizations and governing associations are already ensuring fairness for student athletes making these bills wholly unnecessary.

I acknowledge that I have been privileged in my life: I am a cisgender, straight, white man. When I was in high school, about a decade ago now, I never had to wonder if I belonged. I never had to wonder if I was accepted. The question of which bathroom to use, what sports I was allowed to play, or whether I would be discriminated against because of how I looked; if you're like me, these questions never even occurred to you. But for many trans people, especially trans women, these questions are constant and painful realities. These bills do not protect fairness, they codify exclusion. They tell trans youth that they are unwelcome, that their identity is a problem to be legislated away. We should be creating communities where every young person feels safe and valued the way I did, the way I assume most of you on the judiciary committee did.

On top of being unconstitutional, and on top of being immoral, as a lifelong Mainer, I find these trans discrimination bills to be outright insulting. As of 2019, the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey found that 1.6% of Maine high school students identified as transgender. A subset of those students are trans women and a subset of those women play sports. I find myself wondering: why are Maine legislatures spending their resources debating bills like LD233, "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"?

We have real problems in Maine that directly affect highschoolers. We're in the middle of a housing crisis, programs that provide students with school lunches are under attack, and the cost of post-secondary education is prohibitively exorbitant. We have real problems in Maine; pushing legislation to prohibit less than 1% of high school students from participating in extracurriculars does nothing to address these problems. These bills don't serve to protect students but instead represent an abhorrent attack against an already marginalized group of Maine children.

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