

Sarah Dodwell  
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LD 233

Dear Committee members,

I am writing to express my opposition to the bills before you including LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, LD 1337, LD 1432 and LD 380.

In particular, I would like to address LD 233. I am a physician and mother of 3 student athletes. This bill is both scientifically unfounded, harmful to transgender children as well as harmful to ALL girls.

In debating the issue of transgender athletes, there is a lot of talk of fairness. It is important to start by acknowledging that perfect fairness cannot be achieved. In our schools, in sports, in society and our laws we should strive for absolute fairness, but much of the time that cannot be achieved. Our goal instead should be to find the best possible solution that balances harms.

In the case of transgender girls competing in girls sports, there is no solution that would produce perfect fairness to all athletes. When transgender girls compete against girls, in some circumstances, they may have an unfair advantage against the other athletes. However, research on this topic has shown that on average, transgender athletes do not have an advantage

(<https://cces.ca/transgender-women-athletes-and-elite-sport-scientific-review>). The number of transgender athletes in Maine can be counted on one hand. So when we look at girls sports in Maine as a whole, the potential harm of allowing transgender girls to compete on the teams that align with their gender is miniscule.

But let's examine the potential harm if LD 233 and similar laws are passed. First, the language in the proposal is not scientifically informed. The term "biological males" is problematic. How is that determined? Chromosomes, genitalia at birth, hormone levels? Biological sex is actually not as straightforward as many people think. One example is androgen insensitivity syndrome. This is a condition in which the developing fetus has XY(male) chromosomes but there is a problem with hormone secretion so that the baby is born with female genitalia. These types of intersex cases are rare, but they demonstrate how sex is not as black and white as we may think. If LD 233 passes, it could put some female athletes in a position of having to prove their "biological sex" if they seem "too tall" or "too muscular" or generally not conventionally feminine. That would certainly cause harm to female athletes who would be subjected to this kind of scrutiny and bullying.

And then there is the harm to transgender children if these bills are passed. These children would be faced with the choice of having to compete on a team that does not align with their gender or just sit out sports all together. Participating in sports, and being on a team, is so crucial for many kids' mental health and wellbeing. We know transgender kids are so high risk for mental health adverse outcomes. To exclude these vulnerable kids from activities would cause tremendous harm.

Thank you very much for your consideration.