

Testimony to the Maine Judiciary Committee – May 8, 2025

RE: :LD 233, LD688, LD1134, LD1432

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Good morning Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Frederick Veitch – I am a resident of Yarmouth and the father of one former and one current Maine high school athletes – my daughter who was a runner and my son who currently plays golf, basketball and lacrosse. I write today in OPPOSITION to the bills before the committee today.

The State of Maine does not have a compelling state interest to enact the bans or create the changes to established Maine law that are proposed throughout these bills. None of the proposed measures can point to or have any actual data of real harm to the group they allegedly seek to protect. On the contrary, they intend to create and perpetuate fear, discrimination, exclusion and emotional and mental anguish, all under false or misleading pretenses.

Youth sports, and school sports in particular, have always existed to create avenues of physical activity and competition for the express purpose of engaging and teaching adolescents lessons in hard work, perseverance, teamwork, camaraderie, and self-determination that cannot be obtained in the classroom. Culturally, for the most part, we've lost sight of this reality – instead of valuing school athletics, including high school athletics, as extensions of the holistic education of all our children, most treat them as competitive vehicles to elevate the most physically, and financially, gifted. Approximately 47,000 students participate in high school athletics in the state of Maine, .001% of whom are transgendered. The backers of the bills before you point to usurpation of position, placement or ranking as if these are the sole, and most important valuation relative to participation, and when that fails, raise non-existent safety concerns. Not only does this overshadow and negate the very real and very substantive reason that most all students engage in school athletics – to be part of a team, to have a tribe, to take up an individual passions and pursuits with like-minded individuals – it also misunderstands and overemphasizes placement and ranking within school sports.

Placement and ranking, while certainly important to the individual/team competing, has little actual material value in high school sports, and focusing on it undercuts the fundamental purpose of having school athletics. The only relevant objective externally recognized value to high achievement, especially in high school athletics – college admission or scholarships – relies **solely and exclusively** on individual times, performances, and skill sets – not where one finished in relationship to all the others who competed or whether a title or top “x” finish was obtained. Considering the multitude of subjective factors that go into individual performances and outcomes in any given sport and competition, including the wide variety of natural and augmented abilities that each athlete brings to competition, suggesting that transgender athletes are

somehow gaining “unfair advantages” not only fails to account for this reality, but aims intentionally to skew the argument.

Were the authors of these bills truly concerned about issues like “safety,” “access,” or “fairness,” especially “level playing fields in sports,” they would address the endemic issue of wealth disparity across the youth industrial sports complex. Anyone who has ever had a child participate in school athletics knows that the most statistically significant factor that determines who does well and who does not is almost exclusively wealth and access to private training, coaches, camps, and those towns whose concentrated wealth and focus on school athletics programs routinely produce disproportional results, positions, rankings, and championships. To suggest that transgender athletes, especially female transgendered athletes, exist to “gain an advantage” is laughable, with no evidence to back the position. That these adolescences would intentionally place themselves in the position to be subject to nearly constant criticism, ridicule, and in some cases public humiliation and attacks by adults to gain a competitive advantage in high school sports strains credibility at best. In my personal experience, each and every one of these athletes only wants to participate with and compete against those with whom they identify and with those whom they feel comfortable and supported – consistent with the gender with which they identify with and present as. And in so doing, they, and those who support them, truly embody the true purpose and intent behind school athletics.

Thank you all for the opportunity to present my perspective on this issue with the Committee. I urge all of you to vote “Ought Not to Pass” on each of these bills before you. Thank you.