

Lorien Whitten
North Yarmouth
LD 233

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for your time and attention to the matters at hand. My name is Lorien Whitten. I am a licensed mental health therapist in private practice and a resident of North Yarmouth. I am writing today to state my opposition on LD 233, LD 868, and LD 1134. I have been in private practice for almost 15 years and the mental health field for 25 years. I primarily work with members of LGBTQ+ community. I have seen how discrimination of them have negatively affected their mental health and at times have led to suicidal attempts. Transgender people often feel ostracized, are bullied, struggle with depression, low self worth and low self-esteem. Banning transgender girls from playing sports aligned with their gender identity will absolutely negatively affect them. Feeling connected to others and accepted are what we all want as humans. As a therapist, I have seen countless times that acceptance, belonging, and connection leads to less depression and an overall more positive mental health. Isn't that what playing youth sports are for?

Let's name what these proposed bills really are. They are perpetuating hatred and condoning discrimination and transphobia.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote to NOT pass these bills and to support members of the LGBTQ+ community.