

Sarah Carnahan, LCSW
Vienna, Maine
May 8th, 2025

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

I appreciate the time and attention you are giving to this public hearing. My name is Sarah Carnahan, and I'm a Licensed Clinical Social Worker dedicated to protecting and preserving the mental health of Mainers of all genders. I am writing to express my fierce opposition to the 8 anti-trans bills at the center of today's hearings.

In addition to my education as a social worker, I have Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality studies. Because of my educational background and human rights activism, I am fortunate to have had close relationships with trans and nonbinary friends and family for over two decades. The reason that I'm writing today is really very simple; I don't want these beautiful, valuable people to die.

As a long-time personal ally of and mental health provider to trans and nonbinary people, I know what happens when people are not allowed to live as who they are. In fact, we should all know because the statistics are exceedingly clear; a recent study in the journal Nature Human Behavior found that in states where anti-trans legislation was passed, suicide attempts by trans and nonbinary youth increased by up to 72%.

Don't fall for the masquerade of protecting "girls' and women's rights" in athletics. If this were really about that, people would be upset about the vast majority of stand-out athletes. For example, as a ciswoman of average height (5'4"), I could be on a volleyball or basketball team playing against a team with two ciswomen that I know who are each 6 feet tall. Though they are a full 8 inches taller than average, the alleged "athletic rights" advocates don't seem bothered by her genetic advantage. That's because this isn't about biological advantage in sports. These types of bills are about transphobia, plain and simple.

Over the years, I have shared bathrooms with more trans and nonbinary people than I can count. And actually, people are right when they state that there's a safety issue here - but it's not for cisgender people like me. The safety issue is for trans and nonbinary people who are attacked and assaulted in bathrooms. The repeated safety issue that I have encountered is when I have to go into a bathroom to make sure that it's clear so that a trans friend can enter without fear of re-experiencing previous physical and verbal abuse they've experienced in bathrooms before.

We herald Maine is being “the way life should be.” That can't be true unless all Mainers have equal rights. Do not let this transphobic, ignorant legislation go through. Dirigo.

Thank You,
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