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May 8, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my personal perspective on several of the bills under consideration today. I am testifying today as a resident of Ogunquit and as a cisgender woman. Specifically, I am writing to state my opposition to **LD 233, LD 868, and LD 1134.**

Though I am now proud to call Maine home, I mostly grew up in Florida. In high school, I discovered one sport I could actually excel at: rowing. Throughout high school, I was a member of a lightweight 4 boat that won local, regional and state championships. We worked hard, practicing for 3 hours every afternoon in Florida heat, and took pride in our speed and strength despite our relatively small size. In practice, we regularly competed against the boys' boats (we regularly beat them) and the varsity women (being much stronger than us, they usually beat us). My rowing experience was an enormous part of my identity.

Every time I see, read or listen to the assertions made in support of legislation like these— that allowing kids identified 'male' at birth to compete on 'girls' sports teams will erode the athletic experience and opportunities for girls— I reflect on my high school athletics experience. Had one of my classmates who rowed in the boys' boat been rowing in our boat instead, would we have suddenly won against our competitor's boats? Given how frequently we beat the boys, it doesn't seem likely. If one of the rowers in our competitor's boat was assigned male at birth but identified as, and so rowed as, a girl, would the very trajectory of my life have been altered? Not likely. Would I have felt unsafe changing for practice in a locker room next to someone who identified as a girl but was born with 'male' genitalia? Given how aggressive high school aged cisgender girls can be, I can't imagine a transgender girl being more dangerous. In fact, the only time I ever felt unsafe during my time as a high school athlete was when my cisgender, heterosexual adult male coach was arrested for child voyeurism.

Transgender kids are neither a threat to cisgender kids' safety nor their potential success as athletes. Not only is the percentage of transgender kids extremely low, there is virtually no evidence of instances in which a transgender girl attacked or threatened a cisgender girl in a locker room or bathroom. There are, though, plenty of instances in which cisgender adult men assault and harass cisgender and transgender kids. The only outcome of banning transgender girls from playing sports with their peers will be even worse mental health for transgender kids and even higher rates of suicide among them than there already is. Yes, the safety of kids in Maine should be of the utmost concern for this committee. But these bills do nothing to actually protect kids' safety. They simply perpetuate discrimination and mistreatment fueled by fear and hate of the other. I urge you to vote 'out naught to pass' for each of these bills.