

Rebecca Cohen  
Portland  
LD 868

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Rebecca Cohen, and I am a math teacher at Deering High School in Portland. I am writing in opposition of the bills before the committee today.

School sports are immensely important to many of my students. Our sports teams provide joyful, supportive environments and increase our students' sense of connection to school, leading to improved attendance and academic performance.

This bill would negatively impact all girls at Deering who play sports and reduce the positive effects of being on a sports team by increasing hostility towards all female athletes. Many of my students already struggle with body image and self esteem, some to the point of eating disorders and other self-harm practices. This bill will lead to increased scrutiny of student athletes' bodies, which will worsen their mental and physical health. The threat of increased scrutiny will make the idea of playing a school sport less appealing, especially to students who need that positive experience the most. This bill does not ensure equity and safety, but would make school sports less safe for many girls.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills.