

[LD 233](#) *An Act to Prohibit Biological Males from Participating in School Athletic Programs and Activities Designated for Females When State Funding Is Provided to the School* - Rep. Dick Campbell of Orrington

Testimony to Maine Legislature Judiciary Committee
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to express my strong opposition to LD 233, *An Act to Prohibit Biological Males from Participating in School Athletic Programs and Activities Designated for Females When State Funding Is Provided to the School*, and related legislation that seeks to exclude transgender girls from participating in school athletic programs designated for females.

I am a Mainer, a human rights professional, and the family member and friend of a number of trans individuals, who I love and respect dearly. This bill deliberately and cruelly targets the most basic humanity, worth, and dignity of trans individuals and, what's worse, takes aim at children.

This bill is unconscionable. It targets a small, already vulnerable group of young people—transgender girls—and denies them access to the full experience of school life, including the opportunity to participate in sports. In Maine, this bill will impact a handful of students, and constitute an effort tantamount to the bullying of children by adults who refuse to recognize the inherent worth, dignity, and rights of every child, and ought to know better. Participation in school athletics fosters not only physical health but also community, belonging, and self-confidence. No student should be denied these benefits simply because of their gender identity.

LD 233 is unnecessary and harmful. Existing policies, such as those developed by the Maine Principals' Association (MPA), already provide fair and thoughtful guidance on student participation in athletics. The MPA allows transgender or non-binary students to participate in sports in accordance with their gender identity, ensuring inclusivity while maintaining fairness in competition. This proposed legislation introduces the risk of discrimination, legal challenges, and further stigmatization of transgender youth without addressing any actual problem.

Moreover, the passage of this bill would send a message that transgender students are not welcome in Maine schools. That message has serious consequences. Studies consistently show that LGBTQ+ students, and transgender students in particular, experience higher rates of mental health challenges, bullying, and school disengagement when they are denied affirmation and inclusion. According to The Trevor Project's 2024 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People, 46% of transgender and nonbinary youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year. Furthermore, the Human Rights Campaign's

2023 LGBTQ+ Youth Report found that 62.6% of transgender and gender-expansive youth have been teased, bullied, or treated badly at school for at least one reason in the prior year.

In Maine, the impact of this bill would be felt by a very small number of students. Reports indicate that only two transgender girls are currently participating in school sports programs statewide. Targeting such a small group with restrictive legislation not only lacks justification but also amplifies the marginalization these students already face.

I urge the Committee to reject this and similar proposals. LD 233 is part of a broader national trend that seeks to politicize young people's lives in deeply damaging ways. Maine has the opportunity to choose a different path—one rooted in dignity, fairness, and the well-being of all students.

Thank you for your service and consideration of this issue. I respectfully urge the Committee to vote "Ought Not to Pass" on LD 233, and to affirm Maine's longstanding commitment to fairness, legal integrity, and the basic humanity of all our students.