

[LD 1337](#) *An Act to Amend the Maine Human Rights Act Regarding Female Athletes and Safety in Women's Single-sex Shelters* - Rep. Elizabeth Caruso of Caratunk

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 testify in strong opposition to LD 1337. As a Mainer, a human rights professional, and a loved one of several transgender individuals, I am deeply disturbed by this bill. It seeks to remove Maine Human Rights Act protections from transgender women in two key areas: emergency shelters and athletics—further marginalizing an already vulnerable population for political gain.

This bill would allow shelters to deny services to transgender women, despite the fact that 30% of transgender people in the U.S. have experienced homelessness, according to a 2019 report by the National LGBTQ Task Force. Transgender women, particularly women of color, are at greater risk of violence and sexual assault, especially when forced to live on the street or in unsafe environments. Access to affirming shelters can be life-saving.

LD 1337 also promotes exclusion in athletics by aligning Maine's Human Rights Act with restrictive federal interpretations of Title IX. Yet there is no credible evidence that transgender women in sports create unfair advantages or threaten the safety of cisgender athletes. Major sports bodies, including the NCAA, have inclusive policies in place, with no documented harm to fairness or competition.

More broadly, this bill sends a harmful message to transgender youth. According to GLSEN's 2021 National School Climate Survey, 42% of transgender students feel unsafe at school due to their gender identity—a number that only rises when discriminatory policies are enacted. Rather than supporting students, LD 1337 increases the risk of bullying, mental distress, and school disengagement.

Thank you for your service and consideration of this issue. I respectfully urge the Committee to vote "Ought Not to Pass" on LD 1337 and instead work toward creating a Maine that supports the rights, safety, and well-being of all its residents, regardless of gender identity.