

Meaghan Harned  
Portland  
LD 233

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Portland, ME  
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Meaghan Harned, and I'm a resident of Portland. I am here in opposition to the entire slate of bills before the committee today.

I was born and raised in Woolwich, Maine, and was a student at Woolwich Central School from kindergarten through the eighth grade. After that, I attended Lincoln Academy in Newcastle, Maine.

While those schools had their issues, one thing that I can confidently say is that the teachers worked hard to create and maintain an environment that was fundamentally safe, in order for their students to grow and learn – and they did a great job. Now, as an adult who has returned to Maine out of love for my home state, I am appalled that we are here today considering such an extensive slate of bills, all of which aim to reduce protections for our children, which will in effect make school less safe for ALL our kids.

Because, should these bills pass, school will be less safe for ALL kids, and especially all girls. To name just two examples: These bans would allow any person to demand an invasive and potentially traumatizing “gender check” on any girl who wants to play sports if they judge her to be “too tall” or “too strong.” Not only that, but these measures would embolden spectators, community members, and competitors to harass girls by accusing them of being trans. If these bills pass, they will become another weapon for bullies to use against girls in school – again, a space that should be safe for learning.

Aside from all the obvious social problems these bills would create or exacerbate, it's illegal. Bills such as LD 233, LD 868, and LD 1134 that discriminate against trans students violate both state and federal constitutional guarantees of equal protection – so if you pass these bills, you will need to prepare for a massive legal fight.

Mainers are independent, and one thing I know is that we care about our kids, whatever our political leanings. I urge the committee not to be bullied by the current administration. Our children are in the crosshairs here, so I ask the Committee to do the right thing and protect their privacy and their safety in our schools and vote “Ought not to Pass” on this slate of anti-trans legislation on all fronts. Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee.