

Testimony of Beth Lambert, Fairfield, ME

In Opposition to LD 233, LD 1134, LD 868, LD 1704, and LD 1002

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Date: May 8, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Judiciary committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Beth Lambert. I am a non-transgender woman, a parent, and a lifelong educator with 25 years of experience as a teacher and school administrator. I currently serve in a leadership role at the Maine Department of Education, but I want to make clear that I am speaking today solely as an individual—drawing on my experience as a parent, a non-transgender woman, and an educator of 25 years. My testimony reflects my own personal beliefs, not the views of the Department. I care deeply about student well-being, school safety, and creating environments where every child feels a sense of belonging.

I am writing in strong opposition to the suite of bills before you that seek to restrict transgender students' rights in school settings – bills that would limit access to bathrooms and facilities, bar participation in sports aligned with students' gender identity, and mandate narrow, binary policies about who belongs where.

These proposals are being framed as efforts to “protect girls.” But as a non-transgender woman who grew up playing sports, and who has spent her career working to uplift young women, I feel compelled to say: if these bills are about protecting girls, we're starting in the wrong place.

Girls today face very real inequities, and it's not transgender students who are causing them. In many schools, they still receive fewer resources, less desired practice and game times, and limited access to high-quality athletic facilities. Girls' sports are underfunded and under-covered compared to boys'. In professional athletics, women are paid significantly less and receive a fraction of the media attention. And too often, girls face social pressures, objectification, and harassment, not because of inclusive policies, but because we have yet to fully address how gender bias operates across systems.

If we truly want to protect girls, let's ensure equal investment in their athletic programs. Let's hold adults accountable for creating safe, respectful spaces. Let's teach consent, challenge harmful gender stereotypes, and value girls' contributions at every level. But let's not scapegoat transgender students, particularly trans girls, under the guise of fairness. That is not protection, that's exclusion.

Instead, these proposals target transgender students—a small, vulnerable group of young people who already face significantly higher rates of bullying, homelessness, and suicide. And they do so under the false banner of “fairness.” Framing this as protection distorts the facts and diverts resources from the broader, systemic work that equity truly requires.

Beyond the ethical harm, these bills raise serious practical and legal questions. Let’s talk about implementation. Because even if one were to set aside ethical concerns (and I would argue we should not), the logistical implications of these bills are deeply alarming.

How will schools determine who is transgender and who is not? Will there be forms to fill out? Investigations to open? If a student is accused of being trans, who is responsible for verifying that? Will teachers or administrators be expected to examine birth certificates—or worse, body parts? Are we really prepared to turn our public schools into sites of surveillance and body policing?

These are not rhetorical questions. These bills provide no guidance on implementation. And in that void, they invite suspicion, anonymous reporting, invasive scrutiny, and violence. They open the door to profiling, rumors, and the inappropriate policing of young people’s bodies. It begins to resemble something more like McCarthyism than a public education policy.

I have led schools. I have worked with children and teenagers for more than two decades. I know what makes a school safe, and I know what makes it dangerous. These bills do not protect students—they endanger them. Not just transgender students, but any student who doesn’t conform to someone else’s expectations of what a girl or boy is “supposed” to look like or act like.

What happens to the girl with a deep voice or short hair who gets accused of being in the “wrong” bathroom? What happens to the boy who’s not traditionally masculine but just wants to be left alone? These policies will harm far more children than they claim to protect.

Schools should be places of trust, belonging, and care. Policies like these sow fear, suspicion, and division. They tell some students they are problems to be managed rather than young people to be supported. And they force educators into impossible positions, caught between their duty to serve *all* students and the legal threat of discriminatory mandates.

The truth is, safety isn’t just about who shares a bathroom or locker room. It’s about how we treat one another. It’s about whether kids feel respected, believed, and protected—no matter who they are. And when laws single out or stigmatize one group of students, they chip away at the foundation of belonging for *all* students.

As a non-transgender woman, I want to say again, unequivocally: I am not afraid of transgender women. Their existence does not threaten mine. What threatens me—and my values—is the erosion of empathy, evidence, and equity in how we shape education policy.

Please vote “ought not to pass” on these bills. Let Maine continue to be a state where our public schools are led by educators, not fear. Where we make decisions based on the well-being of *all* students, not political calculations. And where every child—no matter their gender identity—is treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Thank you for your time.