

Maile Sapp  
Orono, Maine  
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Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Maile Sapp (she/her) and I am a cisgender female who is a resident of Orono, Maine. I am writing as a Doctoral Candidate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Maine, a Certified Mental Performance Consultant from the Association of Applied Sport Psychology, and a former NCAA DI Female Student-Athlete and youth track and field and Nordic ski coach. I am writing in OPPOSITION of the bills before the committee today. Specifically, I write to share insights regarding LD 233, LD 868, LD 1134, LD 1337.

### **Sports are a Protective Factor**

Global suicide and mental health concerns for youth and adolescents are rising. Empirical evidence reports that transgender and gender diverse (TGD) individuals face a significant risk for psychological disorders with 45-95.5% of TGD individuals reporting lifetime suicidal ideation. Sports can be a significant protective factor. Empirical research suggests that adolescent participation in sport can significantly decrease thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts, and depression. As a former competitive athlete and coach, and now mental health and sport and performance optimization professional who works alongside individuals with various identities, backgrounds, and lived experiences, I know firsthand the profound and lifesaving impact that participation in sport can afford. Sports can be an arena to enhance confidence, sense of belonging, an outlet for life's challenges, and promote transformative skill development. Maine schools and sport teams should foster an inclusive and supportive environment for ALL.

### **Life Threatening and Devastating Impacts if the Bills are Passed**

In my professional roles I have also seen the devastation and life-threatening impacts of when sport is involuntarily taken away and when discrimination and violence are experienced by athletes. If these bills pass it will be a direct threat to TGD people's safety and well-being. Importantly, to deny someone the opportunity to participate in sport, use the bathroom that aligns with their identity, receive gender affirming care, and remove gender identity as a category in the Maine Human Rights Act is simply unconstitutional and would follow a harmful federal trend.

### **Threats to Cisgender Females**

If these bills are enacted and take sport away from TGD, there are significant consequences for cis girls and women. All females will be subject to additional scrutiny and questioning about their abilities, gender, and bodies if this bill is passed. Concerns of fairness, discrimination, and harassment will be escalated. These concerns should be addressed by the proper organization and governing association using evidence-based policy.

### **Shift the Energy Towards Inclusion and Evidence-Based Policy**

I urge you to shift the energy towards increasing inclusion, increasing equity, and towards increasing safety for ALL. To make informed decisions based on empirical evidence. If these bills are passed, the barriers and disparities will continue to rise. Instead, I urge you to break down the barriers in and outside of sport. Break down the barriers of transphobia, racism, sexism, classism, misogyny, ableism. Celebrate and uplift the identities and triumphs of athletes- the dedication, commitment, the growth.

**Trans People Belong**

Trans people belong in sports.

Trans people belong in Maine.

Trans people belong in Maine sports!

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

Thank you,

**Maile Sapp, M.A., Ed.M., CMPC**

Orono, Maine