

Gray Baldwin
Damariscotta
LD 1337

Gray Baldwin
Damariscotta

Senator Carney and Representative Kuhn and distinguished members of the Maine Judiciary Committee, my name is Gray Baldwin. I live in Damariscotta, Maine. I am a therapist of over 30 years of experience as well as a researcher in culturally responsive practices.

I am here to testify against 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.

I submit this testimony tonight voice my unwavering opposition to the proposed bans on trans women from accessing shelters and participating in sports. This is not just an issue of fairness, but one of human dignity and basic rights. These proposed bans are not only harmful to trans women, but they perpetuate discrimination, exclusion, and a profound misunderstanding of what it means to live as a trans individual in today's world. In addition, the protection of women veneer of this bill is only a way to make discrimination against a minority palatable. Statistically, trans women are not a threat to women or girls. Statistically, the threat is cisgender, white men for molestation and sexual assault.

Regarding shelters, every person deserves a safe space, particularly when they are vulnerable, due to being unhoused, escaping violence, a victim of natural disasters, or loss of heat in the winter. Banning trans women from these spaces is not just discriminatory, it is a denial of their fundamental right to safety and protection. Trans women, like all women, are at higher risk of violence, harassment, and exploitation. A ban on their access to women's shelters effectively forces them into unsafe environments, where their well-being and lives may be put in danger. Trans women are often already marginalized in society, and denying them access to these life-saving resources only exacerbates their vulnerability. Every person, regardless of their gender identity, should be able to find refuge in a space that affirms their identity, not one that perpetuates harm.

Trans women should also have the right to compete in sports, just as any other woman does. Sports are more than just games—they are about building confidence, health, community, and self-expression. Banning trans women from competing in women's sports does not create fairness; it creates exclusion and sends the message that their identities are not valid. The argument that trans women have an unfair advantage in sports is not backed by evidence. In fact, most sports organizations have already put in place guidelines to ensure that trans women compete fairly, including hormone level regulations and other safeguards. The goal should be to create inclusive environments where all women—cisgender and transgender alike—can excel and thrive.

At the core of these issues lies a question of dignity and respect. Every person, regardless of their gender identity, deserves to live a life where they are treated with kindness, fairness, and understanding. Banning trans women from shelters and sports communicates a harmful message: that their identities are not legitimate, and their experiences do not matter. It further stigmatizes them, leading to increased discrimination, mental health struggles, and feelings of isolation.

I urge you to reject this bill. These policies harm not just trans women, but society as a whole. We have an opportunity to stand for inclusivity, fairness, and justice. Thank you for your time and consideration.