

Miranda Boissonneault
Gorham
LD 1337

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Miranda Boissonneault. I'm a resident of Gorham, and I'm here on behalf of transgender Mainers. I am here today in opposition of the bills before the committee today.

I've watched with increasing horror over the past several years as senseless transphobia has grown from a niche issue to a driving force in national politics. In 2016, the state of North Carolina lost millions of dollars after passing the nation's first bathroom bill prohibiting trans people from using the correct bathroom. It was almost universally decried as a massive government overreach and infringement on the rights of a group of citizens. The nation rightly recognized that trans people were being unfairly targeted and stood up to defend them. What has changed since then? Why do we need hundreds of bills filed each year seeking to make transgender people second class citizens? Why has it become acceptable to demonize a group of citizens who have done nothing to deserve it? Trans people do not commit violence at rate higher than that of cisgender people. In fact, transgender people are several times more likely to be victims of violent crime than cisgender people. Bills like those being discussed today increase the likelihood of acts of violence against trans people.

Again I ask, what have transgender people done to deserve this? Transgender girls and boys and women and men are Mainers just like you. They want to love and be loved. To live regular lives and enjoy the same things you do: going to the gym, playing with their teammates, and competing together towards a common goal. There is no reasonable basis to deprive transgender people of these experiences that are such an integral part of human life. Beyond that, trans athletes have been allowed to compete in the sport matching their gender identity for years and what negative consequences have there been? None. If anything, transgender athletes are statistically underrepresented in sports. How many trans girls and boys have missed out on the experience and camaraderie of learning and growing with their teammates?

Beyond the focus on sports, the remainder of these bills are an assault on a marginalized group of your fellow citizens. What is the public good served in discriminating against a group of people with no rationale basis to do so? Trans people don't hurt you. Trans people aren't threatening anyone by asking to have a place in society. Rights are not a pie. Every citizen should have them. Please don't try to remove trans people from society by removing them from the same things you enjoy: sports, being able to relieve themselves when they need to, accessing life-saving medicine or shelter when it's needed. Or even the basic protection from harassment and discrimination just for being who you are.

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