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Portland, Maine
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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 Sydney Cotter and I'm a resident of Portland. I am writing in opposition of the bills before the committee today.

As a trans adult who was once a trans kid, I can speak from personal experience. At 11 years old I was relentlessly bullied in school, in the locker room, and even in my own home just for being a little different.

Data overwhelming proves that trans people are victims, rather than perpetrators, of harassment and assault in public restrooms. In fact, trans and non-binary adolescents are 12% more likely to be sexually assaulted in restrooms than cisgender high school girls. (Murchison et al., 2019)

I can personally guarantee that the discrimination these bills would impose will result in devastating consequences and incur irreversible damage to trans children for the rest of their lives.

Maine does not need these bills. Sports participation issues are already being addressed by the appropriate entities to ensure fairness. Schools should celebrate diversity and create a supportive environment where every student can receive an education and participate in school activities with their peers.

Bills that discriminate against transgender students violate both state and federal constitutional guarantees of equal protection. LD 233, LD 868, and LD 1134 are discriminatory on the basis of sex and therefore are not constitutional. These bills would only serve to hurt vulnerable children, hinder Maine schools, and fracture our communities.

Let me be clear: trans kids deserve to feel valued, they deserve equal opportunities, and most of all they deserve our protection.

Works Cited:

Gabriel R. Murchison, Madina Agénor, Sari L. Reisner, and Ryan J. Watson, "School restroom and locker room restrictions and sexual assault risk among transgender youth," *Pediatrics* 143, no. 6 (2019), e20182902