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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 Aoife Dowd and I'm a resident of Portland. I'm here today to oppose the slew of bills targeting trans kids in our state. As a queer woman married to a trans man, I care very deeply about the trans community and wellbeing of trans kids.

These sports bans, which mostly target trans girls and women's sports, purport to be protecting girls, but they will not keep girls and women safe. We already know how to keep each other safe. Women's sports have long been a space to defy gender stereotypes, explore identity, and build community; these are spaces built on queerness and diversity. Inclusion in sports allows kids the opportunity to challenge themselves to grow and to deny trans kids those same opportunities is cruel.

These bills (LD 233, LD 868, LD 1134, LD 1704) seek to position trans athletes as the enemy in women's sports, but really we know the greatest challenges these young athletes face come not from their own teammates, but from off the field. Sexist behavior, sexual harassment, abuse from coaches, racism, poor facilities and funding, scrutiny of their bodies are all things much more likely to plague girls in sports. These laws only seek to magnify attention on girls and their bodies, putting them at elevated risk.

Additionally, trans kids of all identities deserve safety in school no matter what. LD1002 endangers trans and queer kids and puts many of them in the position of choosing to live authentically, or "out" themselves to potentially unsupportive parents; an impossible decision with potentially dangerous consequences for the child.

Trans kids and athletes of all identities deserve the same opportunities as every child to be themselves in school and in sport. These bills are an attempt to further erase trans kids and trans people from public life and they won't work. Queer and trans people will always be here. I urge the committee to vote "no" on all bills proposed. Thank you.