

Testimony in Opposition to Maine LD 233

Submitted by Liz Blackwell-Moore

Date: 5.8.25

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Liz Blackwell-Moore and I am a resident of Portland. I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to LD 233. I speak today as a resident of Maine, a woman athlete, a mother of a daughter and also as a long-time player and coach of ultimate frisbee- an athletic community that actively embraces inclusivity, belonging, and respect for all gender identities.

USA Ultimate, the national governing body of the sport, has set a clear standard:

"Within our divisions as they currently exist, USA Ultimate will not discriminate on the basis of gender identity, regardless of sex assigned at birth, or any other form of gender expression for participation in any division. We affirm that people of all gender identities should have the freedom to participate in USA Ultimate sanctioned or championship series events in the division in which they feel most comfortable and safe based on their gender identity and should be recognized, respected and included at every level of the sport."

As someone who has played this sport for 30 years and coached youth teams for the past 10 years, I've seen firsthand the power of this inclusive approach. Teams function best when every player feels respected, supported, and safe. Inclusion strengthens our team culture, elevates our competition, and builds trust both on and off the field. When athletes are allowed to compete in alignment with their gender identity, they thrive—and so do the teams they are part of.

LD 233 would impose a harmful and unnecessary restriction that runs counter to the values we uphold in ultimate and in Maine. It would deny young athletes the chance to play sports, an activity we know supports youth wellbeing. This bill would tell some of our players that their identity is not valid, that they don't belong. As a coach, I cannot accept that. I coach to build people up, not to tear them down or force them into categories that ignore who they truly are.

Furthermore, there is no evidence that inclusive participation policies harm the integrity or fairness of sports. What I have seen is that inclusion fosters community, perseverance, and joy—qualities that define the best of youth sports and should be central to Maine's athletic programs.

I urge you to reject LD 233 and stand on the side of fairness, dignity, and inclusion. Let's ensure that every athlete in Maine—just like in the sport of ultimate—knows they are welcome, respected, and free to compete as their authentic selves.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Liz Blackwell-Moore
Portland, Maine