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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Beatrice Schatz and I live in Gray, Maine. I am writing this in opposition of the bills before the committee today.

For all three years of my highschool sports career, I have competed and thrived on cross country running and track and field teams with transgender athletes. This past fall, I had the opportunity to captain my running team and support my teammates at the state meet. The most important aspect of competing on a team has always been made clear to me by coaches, parents, and former captains and teammates. I do not participate to win or place higher than any other athlete. I am a member of a team so that I can push myself, get support and feel supported, and be the happiest, healthiest version of myself. By banning transgender athletes from participating and competing on the team that they identify with, the reasons for being a part of a team are being forgotten. Not only would these bills directly affect the lives of athletes that I care deeply about, but also negatively impact the dynamics and motivations of my teams as a whole. The message that these bills are sending is that there is only one reason to compete and participate in high school sports. This narrative wounds all athletes.

It is a known fact that participating on a sports team as a teen can reduce one's risk of depression, anxiety, and social problems. Participation also strengthens bonds, friendships, and prosocial functioning. At a time when my generation is facing a mental health crisis, exclusion from activities that can actively better the physical and mental health of teens is worsening the problems we are facing. Transgender high school athletes are my peers, friends, and teammates and the exclusion of them is negatively affecting my communities and relationships. If these bills pass, The health and wellbeing of all teens is being disregarded.

If these bills passed, the hard work that my coaches, co-captains, teammates, and I have put into fostering a caring, supportive, and uplifting sports team will be diminished. The lives and well beings of my peers and teammates, whether they are transgender or not, will be negatively affected and changed for the worse. Please consider that there is a face to highschool sports that is not solely about winning and that all athletes are worthy of support and respect.

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!