

Amy Larkin
Arundel, Maine
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Amy Larkin, I live in Arundel and I am writing to you today in opposition LD 868, "An Act To Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Room and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary schools."

I played three sports as a student athlete in elementary and middle school and soccer in high school. Sports helped me learn how to play and have fun, how to lose, and how to support my friends. I loved that we all had opportunities to feel so present and equal. It didn't matter if you were nerdy or if puberty had hit you sooner and you were inches taller than everyone else. In middle school and high school, I convinced friends who insisted they weren't into sports to try out for soccer and they joined me on the team. We got to ride the bus together around southern Maine to our games, wore pajamas to class on game days, and decorated each other's lockers.

This is why kids play sports. When it goes right, you feel included and strong and confident. All children should have this opportunity should they want it. This bill is looking to solve a problem that doesn't exist. But it will create new problems. It will actively harm women and girls under the guise of protecting them. Bans like this invite invasive and potentially traumatizing "gender checks" on any girl who wants to play sports. Enforcing this ban would violate the privacy of all girls and women in Maine.

I'm also deeply concerned that spectators, community members and fellow competitors would be more inclined to harass and even bully girls for being too tall or strong or muscular. I just read a story about a woman using a bathroom in Boston over the weekend who was pulled out of the stall and [asked to show her ID to prove her gender](https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/women-boston-liberty-hotel-bathroom-gender/)¹. How does this keep women safe? Who gets to decide when a girl appears to be too masculine to use a bathroom or play a sport?

There is a lot of national discussion about trans women and girls in sports right now and Maine must stand up for our right to make our own laws. This is an issue rooted in fear of the unknown rather than any actual data, and I hope that we as Mainers can see through this fear to stand for all women and girls including our trans neighbors. Moreover, passing dangerous bills like this would reward the federal government's bullying tactics and open the door for further attacks on Mainers' civil rights without making any of us safer. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on LD 868 and other harmful bills like LD's 233, 1002, 1134, 1704, 1337, 1432, and 380. Thank you so much for your time and consideration on this important issue and for listening today.

¹ <https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/women-boston-liberty-hotel-bathroom-gender/>

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