

Valerie Moyer, PhD
South Berwick
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Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you in advance for reading this written testimony. My name is Valerie Moyer. I'm a resident of South Berwick, former Div. I NCAA athlete (University of Vermont, 2014) and have a PhD in Women and Gender Studies that specifically focused on sports policy surrounding transgender athletes. I am here today in strong *opposition* of the bills before the committee today.

We know that sports are incredibly important in young people's lives. Participating in sports builds confidence, helps mental health, increases social opportunities and bonding – all important experiences with lifelong benefits. I know very well how beneficial supportive sports spaces can be. I was lucky to have excellent coaches and quirky, accepting teammates throughout my life, especially in cross country and track and field in high school and college. I cannot overstate how meaningful these experiences are – they taught me resilience, grit, leadership and how to truly support teammates through challenges. I cannot imagine denying a trans kid the opportunity to experience sports safely and in a gender affirming way. Locker rooms, team buses, and athletic training rooms are all spaces where those team bonds are formed, where self-confidence can be built, and where ultimately, privacy is respected. We know that the most vulnerable and at-risk person in a locker room is trans people, not cisgender girls sharing that space. There is nothing inherently predatory or threatening about trans girls in athletic spaces. I can say that wholeheartedly after all of my combined sports experience and research.

On the research side, there is no clear consensus that trans women retain an athletic advantage over cisgender women after gender affirming care. There was even a recent that found transgender women had a *disadvantage* in strength as compared to cisgender women. I have linked a report that reviews this literature and the 2024 study below. Importantly, all of the studies have been conducted with adults, and each and every one states that findings should not be applied to youth sports.

Another argument that often circulates focuses on collegiate scholarships and winning. I truly believe we need to recalibrate our society about the value of youth sports and ensure they prioritize fun and personal growth over competition. Only a very small percentage of high school athletes will go on to earn a college sport scholarship and compete. However, that makes winning a scholarship seem hyper-competitive in terms of wins and state championships – that's not the case. NCAA recruiting is far more

reliant on an individual's performances and consistency. Annually, the NCAA offers scholarships to over 196,000 student athletes, totaling around \$4 billion. So, it truly does not matter if athletes come in first at a state track meet, as long as their performances are good. I'm originally from Virginia, and did not make the state meet in the distance events I would go on to focus on in college, but my performances were still competitive for a mid-major, Div. I school. Essentially, this argument completely misses the point of high school sports and misconstrues how collegiate recruiting works.

There is a lot of exaggeration and misinformation circulating in this debate about trans athletes. Yes, this is a complicated topic, but the people closest to the few trans athletes in the state are making solid, ethical decisions. I urge you to listen to the needs of trans youth in the state, and trust that professional educators, coaches, and community members who support them are making thoughtful decisions at every step of the way. I trust that they are supporting their kids, while also considering fairness and safety. A state-level ban on trans athletes in sports (even just in girls sports), and in locker room and bathroom spaces dehumanizes trans kids, painting them as threats and leaving their identities open to debate. Furthermore, regulating sports in this way *will* increase scrutiny for all girls in sports – I know I would have hated that environment as a teenager, and I cannot imagine the damage it will do to so many girls' self esteem throughout the state.

Please keep Maine's non-discrimination laws active and effective by opposing these bills.

Thank you,

Val Moyer

References:

<https://cces.ca/transgender-women-athletes-and-elite-sport-scientific-review>

Hamilton B, Brown A, Montagner-Moraes S, *et al.* Strength, power and aerobic capacity of transgender athletes: a cross-sectional study. *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 2024;**58**:586-597.

<https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2014/10/6/scholarships.aspx#:~:text=NCAA%20Divisions%20I%20and%20II,do%20not%20offer%20athletics%20scholarships.>