

Bri Bowman
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LD 233

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

My name is Bri Bowman, I am a resident of South Portland, Maine. I am writing in deep and heartfelt opposition to LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704.

I believe one of the most courageous and loving things we can do — as individuals and in community — is to turn toward authenticity and integrity, and support others in doing the same. I embrace and celebrate my trans siblings and the incredible inspiration and beauty in their journeys and presence. May this courage be an example to us all.

I believe schools should be places where all young people can grow into who they are safely, joyfully, and without shame. Education is not just about academics — it's about understanding who we are, what we care about, and learning how to live in good relationship with others. Denying trans students the ability to fully participate in that process — to play sports, to be included in all spaces, to be seen — is not just exclusion, it is a lesson in intolerance. It teaches students that some of their classmates are less worthy of belonging, and that hate and fear are acceptable responses to difference.

As someone who experienced firsthand the value of school sports, I know they teach far more than competition — they build resilience, teamwork, and confidence. We should want more kids to access those opportunities, not fewer. And the reality is, governing sports bodies already have rules in place to ensure fairness. These bills don't help anyone — they just stigmatize and exclude.

The proposed bills not only target trans girls, but they put all girls in harm's way. These bills would increase bullying, harassment, and scrutiny based on appearance just because someone thinks a girl is "too tall," "too strong," or doesn't "look right." This kind of surveillance and policing of girls' bodies is not only damaging — it's dangerous.

And beyond the harm to students, these bills are unconstitutional and capitulate to federal overreach and bullying. They violate both state and federal guarantees of equal protection. The Maine Human Rights Act has protected gender identity since 2005. Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex.

Maine has the chance to lead — to choose inclusion over exclusion, care over cruelty, courage over fear. I urge you to reject these harmful bills and uphold our shared responsibility to protect the dignity, privacy, and authenticity of all girls, and every student.

Thank you for your time.