

Testimony of Max Bachvarova
May 8, 2025

To:

Senator Anne Carney
Senator Rachel Talbot Ross
Senator David G. Haggan

LD 868: An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools

Good morning Senators, Representatives, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Max Bachvarova, I am a resident of Portland, an alum of the Portland Public School District, and a certified athletic coach. I hold multiple varsity letters and was an SMAA champion as well as an all-conference and all-academic student athlete. The opportunities I was afforded should be available to every student of any gender.

I oppose LD 868 and urge you to follow suit.

This act threatens the safety of student athletes across the board. By classifying sports into sexed categories in which students are separated definitively by their reproductive organs (Sec. 120-A MRSA §14, lines 10-15), a system of enforcement will be inherently created that could subject every student athlete to genital inspection. Supporting this bill will, without a doubt, welcome sexual predation and misconduct against our children.

A 2022 study (E. Jeglic et. al, John Jay College of Criminal Justice) found that nearly **12% of all K-12 students experienced sexual misconduct** by adults in U.S. public schools, **20% of these perpetrators were coaches**. Only 4% of these offenses were ever reported.

Conservatively, around **50% of transgender people experience sexual assault** in their lifetimes and 48% of LGBTQ+ individuals who have been raped **experienced their first rape between the ages of 11 and 17**, middle school to high school age — a statistic that is **three times higher than the cisgender population** (James, Herman, et al, 2022). The highest risk of sexual predation against transgender populations falls on Black trans children ([BreakTheCycle.org](https://www.BreakTheCycle.org), 2024).

To claim, as this bill is titled, that these proposals will “ensure equity and safety” of public school students is simply untrue. The reality is that those who have presented, co-sponsored, and supported this act are putting the lives of our community’s children at risk under the guise of protection.

Do not stand with them today.