

Mikayla Holdorf
South Portland
LD 1337

To the honorable Judiciary committee,

My name is Maggie Holdorf, I am a Maine resident, and a Social Work student. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding LD1337 and the other transphobic bills being proposed today.

This bill is not a protective measure for women and Maine communities; it is a discriminatory attack on trans and gender non-conforming folks, cloaked in the language of safeguarding women's rights. As a proud constituent of Maine—a state recognized for its commitment to civil rights and protections for all—I implore you to see this bill for what it truly is: a harmful strain on LGBTQ+ youth, adults, and their rights.

As a Master's student in Social Work, I am compelled by my ethical responsibilities to speak out against any legislation that undermines the dignity and rights of marginalized communities. It is fundamentally unjust for institutions to restrict youth from participating in school-sanctioned sports based on their gender identity or expression. This bill further exacerbates the cultural divide in our nation and endangers youth and adults alike by creating an environment of exclusion and hostility.

Consider the real issues affecting women in Maine today. Nearly 37% of women will face the trauma of rape or attempted rape—most often at the hands of cisgender men. We are grappling with a caregiver shortage, dwindling rural birthing options, and a rise in systemic discrimination against women. Redirecting attention to trans youth in sports distracts from these pressing concerns and ignores the systemic barriers that truly threaten the safety and well-being of girls and women.

Trans youth, who make up about 2% of our population, are among the most vulnerable, and they deserve our protection, not our scorn. Trans women are women. This statement is not up for debate; it's a recognition of their humanity and identity. Supporting H.R. 28 would not only validate bigotry towards the trans community but also institutionalized discrimination against a population already facing significant hardship.

Let's also look at science. Experts in endocrinology assert that prepubescent students experience no inherent biological advantage, regardless of their sex assigned at birth. Moreover, a 2016 study demonstrated that transgender students denied access to gender-appropriate bathrooms were 45% more likely to attempt suicide. This alarming statistic serves as a stark reminder of the severe consequences that can arise when youth feel ostracized and unsupported. Imagine the positive impact of inclusive sports programs that allow youth to express their true selves and foster a sense of belonging.

Passing this bill could trigger an even larger mental health crisis in Maine, compounding the challenges we already face. Trans youth often rank among the highest risk groups for suicide. Denying them opportunities to build community through sports only deepens their isolation, threatening their mental health at a time when adequate services are already scarce. I urge you to align with the values and needs of your constituents rather than succumbing to rhetoric and fear-mongering that prioritizes divisions over unity.

Finally, I challenge you to reflect on the motivations behind this bill. Why is there such intense scrutiny of youth identities? of Adult identities? Our focus should be on fostering inclusion and equality, not creating barriers.

In closing, I implore you to stand up for all youth in Maine, not just those who society deems "worthy" of protection based on narrow definitions of gender and value. I urge you to vote against this bill and champion a future where every young person can thrive without fear of discrimination.

Kindly,