

Testimony to the Judiciary Committee of the Maine State Legislature  
May 8, 2025

Good morning/afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for your service and for giving me the opportunity to testify.

My name is Maria McEvoy and I live in Lewiston, Maine. I am here today to voice my opposition to several proposed bills, especially those targeting transgender women's ability to participate in sports.

Growing up, my parents coped with my hyperactivity by urging me to play sports, and over the course of my child and teenage years, I tried my hand at everything from soccer and volleyball to fencing and gymnastics. I was terribly uncoordinated and very unathletic, but this didn't discourage me. I tripped over countless balls, fell off every balance beam, and finished races minutes behind everyone else— but it didn't matter, because I was just happy to be part of a team and happy to be moving my body, however awkward and gangly it was. I know there are a lot of highly skilled athletes sharing their opinions today, and I can't speak to their experiences, but I am here to provide the viewpoint of someone who was never going to be a state champion, but who wanted to play regardless. Playing sports helped me cultivate a strong work ethic, a love of healthy competition, and gave me a source of pride and self-respect that was indispensable as I grew up. It also gave me incredible, supportive communities who welcomed me with open arms. It's these communities, and the gifts that these communities provide, that the bills in front of you today are going to take away, not just from trans girls, but from all girls.

It's been shown over the past few years that states that pass anti-trans sports bans see a substantial decrease in all girls participating in sports. In other words, banning trans athletes does not serve to protect women, but actually robs young girls of the opportunity to become athletes.

In addition, anti-trans sports bans subject girls and women to invasive examination and policing of their bodies aimed at "proving" their femininity, judging them based on their ability to adhere to ideas of womanhood that all too often exclude intersex people and women of color. I understand that people who are in support of anti-trans sports bans believe these sorts of bills will uplift and protect young women, something that's also important to me. But it's clear that cutting funding from schools, removing gender based legal protections, and subjecting growing girls to the surveillance of their bodies by those in power will only serve to discourage girls from becoming athletes.

We've allowed fearmongering and misinformation to shift the attention away from the vast majority of us, who are never going to win any awards, but who want to play anyways. If you support girls' right to play sports in a welcoming environment, free of harassment and ridicule, then I urge you to vote ought not to pass.

