

To: Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee

My name is Heather Foran, and I am a resident of Gray. I am submitting testimony today in opposition to the bills before the committee today.

I grew up playing soccer, lacrosse, and swimming in the state of Maine. I was an all-conference or all-state athlete and a team captain in all three sports. Playing high school sports here was everything to me - it fostered my leadership skills, built my confidence, and instilled a profound sense of team. I was intensely competitive. It also made me proud of being a strong and muscular woman at a time when toxic fashion trends upheld thinness as a standard of beauty. I remember when Brandi Chastain ripped off her shirt in celebration of a goal and how big a deal it was at the time to see a women's body celebrated for being muscled rather than emaciated. Sports were for me a way of redefining what it meant to be a woman in a way that was empowering as opposed to the damning messages society was sending. Trans women are women. This current debate is part of a long history of telling women what is appropriately "feminine" and will only serve to make all women and girls subject to scrutiny or the possibility of invasive gender testing. This bill does not protect women.

If these bills pass, women and girls will be no less safe from the actual threats that they face in our society. These bans make ALL women and girls unsafe: they invite any person to call for an invasive or traumatizing "gender check" on any girl who wants to play sports if they think she is "too tall" or "too strong." They embolden spectators, community members, and fellow competitors to bully and harass girls by accusing them of being trans. If these bills pass, they will become another weapon for bullies to use against girls in Maine. And any attempt to enforce this ban **blatantly violates the privacy of all Maine women and girls** and polices gender norms and scrutinizes girls bodies.

We are talking about 2 known transgender athletes in all of Maine's tens of thousands of student athletes - this is clearly not about threat or risk to women and girls, it is about inciting moral panic towards political division. My heart is with them, their families, and their teammates as they weather the weight of a shameful amount of public pressure concentrated on them. These student-athletes deserve all the success in the world: they deserve to work hard with their teammates, to build their confidence, to foster their leadership skills. If that results in them winning games or races or championships, that is the result of dedication, and passion, and a love of the sport and we should celebrate these athletes' wins. Moreover, we should celebrate that sports are a vehicle for all of us to continue building up participation, confidence, and leadership - and breaking down restrictions on what it means to be a woman, and what women are capable of.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills. Thank you!