

Testimony Opposing LD 1134: An Act to Prohibit Males from Participating in Female Sports or Using Female Facilities

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and other members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Jess Knox, and I am a lifelong Mainer, a father, and a straight, white man who believes deeply in fairness for all. I am here today to express my strong opposition to LD 1134.

LD 1134 seeks to prohibit individuals assigned male at birth from participating in female sports or using facilities designated for females in schools receiving state funding. This legislation targets transgender girls, effectively excluding them from school activities and spaces that align with their gender identity.

As a parent, I recognize how vital it is for schools to be safe and supportive spaces where every child feels acknowledged and respected. Like all students, transgender youth deserve to engage fully in school life without the fear of exclusion or discrimination. LD 1134 would normalize exclusion, conveying to transgender students that they are unwelcome.

Furthermore, this legislation goes against Maine's dedication to equality. In 2005, we broadened the Maine Human Rights Act to cover gender identity, guaranteeing protection from discrimination for everyone, irrespective of their gender identity. LD 1134 actively undermines this commitment by reversing protections and targeting a vulnerable group of students.

Supporters of LD 1134 claim it is essential for ensuring fairness in sports and safety in facilities. Nevertheless, there is no credible evidence indicating that transgender girls possess an unfair advantage in sports or that their inclusion in restrooms and locker rooms creates safety concerns. If proponents of LD 1134 genuinely cared about fairness, they would seek peer-reviewed research on performance disparities—but that's not their true focus. Their arguments stem from fear and misinformation rather than factual evidence.

And those arguments are dangerous and fundamentally cruel. Research consistently shows that transgender youth face higher rates of bullying, mental health issues, and suicide. Policies that exclude and stigmatize them only exacerbate these issues. By passing LD 1134, we risk causing real harm to some of our most vulnerable students.

In conclusion, LD 1134 is a step backward for Maine. It undermines our state's commitment to equality, lacks a basis in evidence, and poses a real threat to the well-being of transgender youth. It puts Maine in the column of willing to retreat on the protections for those who need it most. That's not the way life should be.

I urge you to reject this bill and instead focus on policies that support and uplift all students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.