

## **Written Testimony in Opposition to LD 1337: An Act to Amend the Maine Human Rights Act Regarding Female Athletes and Safety in Women's Single-sex Shelters**

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and other members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Jess Knox, and I currently reside in Portland. I was born and raised in Maine, and I am a father who firmly believes in fairness for everyone. Because of that belief, I am writing to firmly oppose LD 1337.

LD 1337 seeks to amend the Maine Human Rights Act in a way that would exclude transgender women from participating in female athletics and accessing women's single-sex shelters. This legislation targets a vulnerable population, undermines the progress Maine has made in promoting inclusivity, and contradicts the values of equality and respect that our state upholds.

As a parent, I understand the importance of creating environments where all individuals feel safe, supported, and valued. Transgender women, like all women, deserve the opportunity to participate fully in society without fear of exclusion or discrimination. LD 1337 would institutionalize exclusion, sending a message that transgender individuals are not welcome in spaces where they seek support and community.

Furthermore, this legislation opposes Maine's dedication to equality. In 2005, we enhanced the Maine Human Rights Act to include gender identity, safeguarding all individuals from discrimination based on their gender identity. LD 1337 explicitly undermines this commitment by reversing protections and targeting a marginalized community.

Proponents of LD 1337 argue that it is necessary to ensure fairness in sports and safety in shelters. However, there is no credible evidence to suggest that including transgender women in these spaces compromises fairness or safety. These arguments are based on fear and misinformation, not facts. Honestly, given the volume of legislation targeting Trans Mainers, their obsession with this topic seems downright cruel and suspicious.

Research consistently shows that transgender individuals face higher rates of discrimination, mental health issues, and homelessness. Policies that exclude and stigmatize them only exacerbate these issues. By passing LD 1337, we risk causing real harm to some of our most vulnerable community members. That's not the Maine that I know. That's not the side of history that Maine should be on.

In conclusion, LD 1337 is bad 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 individuals. I urge you to reject this bill and instead focus on policies that support and uplift all members of our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

