

BRAZEN BANDITS

TO: The Honorable Amy Kuhn
The Honorable Anne Carney, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

DATE: May 8, 2025

RE: LD 233: An Act to Prohibit Biological Males from Participating in School Athletic Programs and Activities Designated for Females When State Funding Is Provided to the School

LD 868: An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools

LD 1002: An Act to Protect Children's Identification by Requiring Public Schools to Use the Name and Gender Specified on a Child's Birth Certificate

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

LD 1704: An Act to Prohibit a School Administrative Unit from Adopting a Policy That Allows a Student to Use a Restroom Designated for Use by the Opposite Sex

Hello Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Sampson Spadafore and I am the co-founder of the Trans artist collective, Brazen Bandits. We operate from a belief that creative practice builds community care through socially conscious art; centering pleasure, celebration of revolution, and trans-cendence of our current world.

I wonder, have any of you spent any time with trans youth? I've had the honor of bringing my trans community together to explore our creative practice and process the attacks on our community. What always blows me away is the tenacity, determination and clarity of self of our trans youth. They know themselves on such a deeper level than I think many of us could imagine at that age. The magic of trans people is not that we're trans, it's that we have asked ourselves deep and often uncomfortable questions and faced the answers that came, even when it meant giving up all we know, the ground we stand on, the lives, stories, identities, and sometimes relationships, that we had built on that ground.

What emerges from these difficult questions is often an unbridled joy and a strong sense of self, such that cannot be diminished by legislation that is riddled with inaccuracies, false narratives, and transphobia like the ones we are seeing today. That beautiful trans joy allows our youth to flourish. Why would we want to suppress that? Our trans youth will turn into elders. Should we not raise them as such?

It disturbs me to see so many bills targeting transgender children. Bills that would not only harm trans kids but also non-trans kids. What we as adults and other children serve to learn from trans youth could be lost as we make schooling and public life harder for them. We are losing these kids. Let me not

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mince words here: these kids are killing themselves. If any of this was really about the safety of children, we wouldn't be seeing legislation like this. I oppose all of these bills that discriminate against trans people and I urge you to do the same.

These policies have been written in bad faith. They aren't actually about trans people, protecting children, sports, bathrooms or fairness. And they reflect to us exactly how we actually see children: as second class citizens that do not deserve their full autonomy. I, for one, do not feel that reflects my values or the values of most Mainers.

I urge this committee to oppose LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704. I am happy to take questions from the committee if they have any. Thank you for your time.