



Gary Friedmann

7 Pine Street
Bar Harbor, ME 04609
Phone: (207) 460-7362

Gary.Friedmann@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1400
TTY: Maine Relay 711

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Testimony of Rep. Gary Friedmann in opposition to
LD 868, An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Gary Friedmann, and I represent House District 14, which includes Bar Harbor, Cranberry Isles, Lamoine and Mount Desert. I am here to testify in opposition to **LD 868, An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools**.

Three months ago, I knew almost nothing about the issue of transgender women competing in sports. But within days of putting my name on this bill, I learned more than I ever could have imagined. Dozens of my constituents and people from across Maine reached out to inform me of just how bad this piece of legislation is. I'd like to share some of what I heard with you.

Transgender people are under attack by politicians at all levels of government and in the media. In fact, transgender students' participation in sports has been a non-issue here in Maine until anti-equality activists manufactured a misinformed conversation to discriminate and stigmatize LGBTQ+ people across the country.

The real problem of equality in sports is the systematic pattern of sexual harassment. This year, while a Maine legislator targeted a transgender student, a coach in her district was arrested for allegedly assaulting middle schoolers.

Cases of sexual violence in Maine schools are widespread. One out of eight middle school girls and one out of four high school girls report experiencing unwelcome sexual contact. 30% of trans middle schoolers and 41% of trans high schoolers reported forced sexual contact.

This is what we should be addressing. But instead of tackling actual threats to safety in schools, this bill perpetuates the conditions that lead to more violence by dehumanizing and scapegoating transgender athletes whose numbers are so small that they literally make up less than one out of 10,000 athletes.

Maine has been a leader in civil rights, including gender identity protections. In 2005, voters upheld legislation adding sexual orientation and gender expression to the Maine Human Rights Act. In 2014, the Maine Supreme Court affirmed the right of students to express their gender

[District 135: Bar Harbor, Cranberry Isles, Lamoine and Mount Desert](#)

identity in schools. In 2021, we defeated legislation to exclude transgender students from K-12 athletics.

Maine students deserve these protections, not bills like this that fabricate problems to serve a political agenda.