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

Thank you for bearing witness to me, and to all of us today. My name is Amy Partridge-Barber. I am a resident of Carrabassett Valley. I have been a clinical social worker for 29 years. I am here today in opposition to all of the bills before you today.

I have decades of professional experience serving as a therapist and coach to children and adolescents. I have the their homes, in my office, and on high school sports fields. when I coached high school field hockey and lacrosse. My roles as athletic coach and social worker are the reason I am against each and every one of these bills. But today I am speaking from a different place. I am speaking to you as a sister.

My sister, Betsy, was born in 1968. She is genetically intersex. And she is a girl, always has been and always will be. She was who doctors and teachers and neighbors told her she was. Rarely did anyone ask her to weigh in on the issue. I knew was that my sister was different. But I was firmly instructed not to bring it up, and certainly not to make a big deal out of it. But it was a big deal. Her gender presentation shaped every aspect of her life. She was called gross, weird, freaky, retarded, and the one that really got me was “boy.” People kept insisting she was a boy. regardless of what she said or how she dressed. She looked like a boy, so she was a boy. Simple as that. I watched Betsy crumble while students, teachers and neighbors taunted her until she collapsed into her room glued to the television.

I was Betsy's younger sister. I didn't know what was going on. But I knew Betsy was a girl. And not because I watched her use the toilet or looked at her birth certificate. I knew Betsy was a girl because she told me was a girl and I believed her. She knew who she was, But it didn't matter. Betsy was booted out of girls dressing rooms, bathrooms, teams, and choirs. She was not welcome at the all girls summer camp I attended because she made people uncomfortable.

The same community who nurtured me because I looked like a girl, unapologetically and aggressively alienated my sister. And, to she matters worse, because her appearance made people uncomfortable she was made to believe she was wrong; about who she was, how she felt, and what she wanted. Betsy was encouraged to deal with it, and she did. But not without consequences. She lives in a group home, has precious few friends, and takes a handful of medications daily to manage her mental health.

The world has not been kind to my sister because she was born outside of traditional gender categories. My sister's only error was to be born as she was. She faced persistent discrimination in her childhood because she didn't fit into the girl box. I use my voice to call out discrimination because I can. People listen to you and trust you more when you look like them.

I ask that you ought not to pass on all the bills before you today.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Partridge-Barber

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