

Lina Martinez Nocito  
Farmington, ME  
May 8, 2025

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

My name is Lina Martinez Nocito, and I am a sophomore at the University of Maine at Farmington, where I compete on the varsity cross-country and track and field teams, and a legislative organizer with Maine Youth Power, a rural, youth-led movement fighting for human dignity, equity, and a livable future for all. I'm writing today to urge you to oppose LD 233.

I've competed against transgender athletes: they've never made me feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or discriminated against. And I am appalled by the growing, pernicious narrative that laws designed to deprive trans girls of the transformative experience of athletics are an effort to protect cisgender girls like me.

Do you truly care about women's sports? Then care that sexual violence remains rampant in women's athletics at every level. In fact, a Maine coach was arrested earlier this year for sexually assaulting a middle schooler. Care that I, like far too many female runners, have been repeatedly catcalled while running. One recent survey that found that 60% of female respondents had been harassed on a run, 11% so badly that they ceased running altogether, and only 13% had never feared for their safety while running.<sup>1</sup> Care about the dystopian-sounding "genital inspections" that have been proposed for all female athletes to prevent trans girls from competing, a bizarre and inhumane measure that would harm cisgender girls, too. Consider taking on the persistent gender pay gap in women's athletics, or the unequal and often disturbingly sexualized coverage of women's sports. But don't target the handful of children and teenagers just trying to participate in activities they love in a country increasingly hostile to their mere existence.

Trans youth are currently facing a barrage of political and cultural attacks—and it's taking a toll. A 2024 survey by the Trevor Project found that 28% of trans and nonbinary youth had been physically threatened or harmed because of their gender identity in the previous year, and that a staggering 46% had seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year.<sup>2</sup>

Inclusive athletics policies can have a hugely positive mental health impact; indeed, one recent study found that "high school-aged transgender and nonbinary student-athletes reported higher grades, lower levels of depression, and were less likely to feel unsafe at school than those who did not play sports."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.runnersworld.com/uk/training/a36278390/reclaim-the-run/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2024/>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.hrc.org/resources/get-the-facts-about-transgender-non-binary-athletes>

As a cisgender female athlete, standing with the trans community and promoting a culture of inclusion and acceptance in the running community I love so much matters infinitely more to me than trying to block a handful of competitors from joining me at the start line. Therefore, I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on LD 233.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lina Martinez Nocito