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

Although I signed up to testify in opposition to LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134 and LD 1704 in person, the day simply went too long and I did not manage to participate. I am buoyed by the extraordinary testimony I heard, and hope you are fully persuaded to oppose all of the anti-trans bills.

I was struck by several themes in the testimony and hope you will take additional steps to address the harm currently experienced by those who shared their personal stories:

1. Maine people are civically engaged and want a Legislature that will focus on our most pressing problems, not manufactured “solutions in search of a problem.”
 - We ask the Bill Sponsors to really listen to the testimony and note the significant turn-out by Maine people of all ages, genders, and regions, and consider *not* continuing to bring these bills year after year.
 - Several people noted that there is harm caused by simply bringing these bills forward, and that continuing to threaten to strip a group of their civil rights is a form of harassment.
 - I was extremely impressed by the commitment of this committee, and the Chair in particular, to maintain an inclusive and respectful hearing despite the long hours. Thank you for holding space so well.
2. Gender nonconforming (including girls who do not fit a particularly feminine mold) and Trans youth face discrimination in school and in access to athletics. This is an [actual violation of Title IX](#) and the Department of Education needs many more resources to address this illegal pattern of exclusion. Individual school districts face significant civil lawsuits if they do not respond to notification of harassment and violence.

3. All youth experience dangerous levels of sexual and gender-based harassment and violence, with perpetrators too often the adults in their life. We must take significant steps to prevent and respond to violence more holistically including:
- ☐ Fully funding our sexual violence response services to provide confidential resources;
 - ☐ Improving prevention education, including evidence based trainings like [Empowerment Self Defense](#) and [RSVP](#) (reducing sexual violence program).
 - ☐ We can create codes of conduct that comply with and exceed the Title IX Federal standards, using projects like [100 School Districts](#) and [Know Your IX - Advocates for Youth](#) to guide districts into best practices.
 - ☐ We can better stem the cruelty and harassment perpetrated by our own colleagues by learning how to [interrupt bias](#), [refuse othering](#) and create spaces of [belonging](#) for all Maine youth
 - ☐ We can return to those who testified, and expand our listening, to build new policy initiatives that they think will best help them recover from the violence and trauma already experienced in Maine. That is, where prevention has already been missed, let us model repair, restoration and rebuild [institutional trust](#).
4. Some youth are at greater risk than others.
- ☐ The testimony highlighted the importance of access to safe and accepting adults and we should create more learning opportunities for all adults who work with kids, including parents, to feel more comfortable with gender diversity.
 - ☐ Trans and gender nonconforming youth experience higher rates of suicidality and need particular access to intervention and support services to stay alive. We should make all available resources accessible to young people through public health campaigns.
 - ☐ Addressing the needs of all Maine kids will also help Trans youth – the importance of access to food, housing, health care, and other basic needs was highlighted throughout the day of testimony. Maine people want the Legislature to create a State where youth thrive, and that includes addressing our high poverty rates.

5. Consider the ERA

- ☐ We are collectively exhausted by the endless fight for maintaining basic civil rights in the face of intense bullying by a small number of people with power. The same dehumanization of Trans girls is happening to Immigrant youth, Black students, disabled students, and generally all people are at risk of being added to the targeted list. We need to enshrine the Maine Human Rights Act into our Constitution to give it more teeth and more staying power - the constant threat of reversal is terrorizing. We also need to ask the State to more fully address patterns of discrimination and ongoing disparities that are not redressed by individual claims. A modern Equal Rights Amendment is needed in Maine and I hope we can build a stronger campaign for 2027.

6. Bibliography -

Suicide

- ☐ [Suicide Prevention in Maine's Law](#) - Schools already have a responsibility to engage prevention education / projects
- ☐ [Facts About Suicide Among LGBTQ+ Young People](#)
- ☐ [Anti-Transgender Laws Cause up to 72% Increase in Suicide Attempts Among Transgender and Nonbinary Youth, Study Shows | The Trevor Project](#)
- ☐ [Suicide Attempts by Children, Yellow Tulip Project](#): *Among transgender students, 54 percent reported suicidal thoughts in the past year, compared with 14 percent of non-transgender students, according to the Maine CDC.*

Sports Related

- ☐ [Tested-Podcast.com](#) - defining sex and gender is an impossible project
- ☐ [NWLC Slams Trump's Anti-Trans Order as Sexist Bullying That Harms All Students](#) (relatively short)
- ☐ [Trans People and Sports: Everything You Need to Know](#) (medium length)
- ☐ [Who Can Referee Gender? -](#) (a bit longer)
- ☐ [Keeping Girls in the Game: Factors that Influence Sport Participation](#)

- ☐ Cynthia Dill's point that "female" is already defined in Maine law is important, and that self-identification is critical has been embedded in our shared understanding of both sex and gender.

K-12 Gender Based Violence

- ☐ YOUTH [K12 Sexual Harassment "Fact Sheet"](#) (older but mostly still relevant)
- ☐ [2023 Girls Index](#)
- ☐ [Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey / Hardy Girls Healthy Women Report on 2023 Youth Integrated Study](#)
- ☐ [2024 National School Climate Survey | GLSEN](#)
- ☐ [Stop Sexual Assault in Schools](#)

From the [2023 Maine Youth Integrated Health Study](#) reveals alarming levels of sexual harassment, assault, and violence affecting students, particularly those marginalized by gender and sexuality.

- According to the study, 88 percent of straight high school students feel safe at school, compared to 68 percent of gay and lesbian students and 60 percent of transgender students.
- In addition, 21 percent of transgender students and 18 percent of lesbian and gay high school students have missed school due to fear of violence, compared to 7.3 percent of heterosexual students.
- Twelve percent of middle school girls and 25 percent of high school girls reported experiencing unwelcome sexual contact.
- And 30 percent of trans middle schoolers and 41 percent of trans high schoolers reported forced sexual contact.
- Finally, 33 percent of high school girls and 13 percent of boys reported offensive sexual comments at school. Among transgender students, this rises to 51 percent of trans girls and 42 percent of trans boys.