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Good morning Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary.

My name is Alyssa Goodwin, M.D., and I am a resident of Brunswick. I am submitting testimony today in **opposition to LD 2399**, An Act to Designate School Sports Participation and Facilities by Sex.

All children are created equal and deserve care, respect, and the opportunity to thrive. Schools play a critical role in the social and emotional development of youth, and **all students deserve to feel safe at school**. The proposed ballot measure is an extreme, blanket ban that doesn't fit in Maine communities. The proposal's language is vague, poorly defined, and dangerous to our youth.

This ballot measure would embolden sports spectators, members of the public, and other students to **harass and scrutinize girls who do not conform to stereotypical notions of femininity**. If passed, this ballot measure would become **yet another weapon for bullies**—hurting all girls in Maine.

We should be fostering **connection and belonging in schools**, not exclusion. Students who feel connected at school are less likely to face health risks related to sexual behavior, substance use, violence, and poor mental health later in life.

Gender-diverse youth are already a vulnerable population, facing disproportionate rates of bullying, depression, self-harm, and suicide. According to the **2025 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS)**:

- **43.1% of transgender high school students** in Maine reported seriously considering suicide in the past year—compared to **11.3% of cisgender peers**.
- **22.6% of transgender students** reported attempting suicide at least once in the past year—compared to **4.5% of cisgender students**.

It is not gender diversity itself that causes these alarming rates—but rather the stigma, harassment, and abuse these youth endure.

Team sports benefit all children. K–12 school athletics foster **connection, confidence, teamwork, and healthy activity**. These proposed policies would put both transgender and cisgender girls at risk of **invasive and inappropriate gender verification procedures**. Policing who “counts” as a girl through any form of sex testing is not only deeply inappropriate—it is a **disturbing violation of privacy** that exposes all girls to the risk of sexual abuse.

Similarly, **restrictive restroom and locker room policies** increase the risk of harm to transgender youth. Research shows that in schools with such restrictions, **transgender students experience higher rates of sexual assault**. This is especially true for transgender girls, whose risk of being assaulted **increased by 149%** when attending schools with restrictive bathroom policies.

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School administrators across Maine have successfully supported transgender students and protected the **privacy and safety of all students**. We should focus on **providing these schools with support and resources**, not blanket policies that **harm our most vulnerable youth**.

I submit this testimony as a **pediatrician in Maine for over 20 years**, a **school physician**, an **expert in youth suicide prevention**, and as the **Chair of the School Health Committee** of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I speak on behalf of the many patients I have cared for over the past two decades—**all of whom deserve the same opportunities, dignity, and respect as every child in Maine**.

Thank you for your time and your continued commitment to the health and safety of Maine's children.

Alyssa Goodwin, M.D.

https://www.maine.gov/miyhs/sites/default/files/2025_Reports/Detailed_Reports/HS/MIYHS2025_Detailed_Reports_HS_State/Maine%20High%20School%20Detailed%20Tables.pdf

<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/143/6/e20182902/76816/School-Restroom-and-Locker-Room-Restrictions-and>