

Brooke Stratford, Kennebunk, ME May 8, 2025
Testimony Opposing LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Brooke Stratford; I live in Kennebunk.

I urge you to vote "Ought Not to Pass" on the bills before you today.

I'm a proud Mainer and I am here because I believe in dignity, fairness, and safety for ALL students. These bills undermine all three.

I'm also a wife and a mother. My family's values are simple: respect every human being, stand up against discrimination, protect and support the most vulnerable among us. The proposed bills do the opposite. They target transgender students - young people who *already* face higher rates of bullying, depression, and even suicide, when compared to their peers, by telling them they don't belong, simply for being who they are and being here.

Bills that ban transgender girls from participating in school sports are not about fairness - they're about fear. They invite invasive scrutiny of any student who doesn't fit someone's idea of what a girl "should" be...maybe they are too tall or talented or confident. It opens the door to bullying, harassment AND policing of ALL girls' bodies. That's not safety - it's surveillance. That's not fairness - it's fear. These bills, if passed, are WEAPONS that can be used against ALL girls, any and everywhere in our State.

Transgender students make up a tiny fraction of our population, but they bear a disproportionate burden of hate and harm. Instead of protecting them, these bills single them out. They send a cruel message: that WHO they are is wrong; that they don't belong; that they don't even deserve to exist.

School should be a place where EVERY child feels seen, supported and SAFE. Where every student has the chance to learn, grow, and participate - off and on the sports field. Inclusion in sports is about more than competition - it's about confidence, community, life lessons and connection. No child should have to prove their gender to play a sport with their peers.

This legislation isn't just bad policy—it's part of a broader, dangerous National trend...one that seeks to divide communities and demonize children. Maine doesn't need to follow that path, nor should it. Maine can, and should, lead with compassion, integrity and courage.

Let's not turn our schools into battlegrounds over identity. Let's protect all kids - especially those most at risk. Let's build communities where every student knows they matter; where their RIGHTS are not up for debate.

Vote "Ought Not to Pass." Protect Maine students. Choose dignity over discrimination. Fairness over fear. Inclusion over exclusion.

The State of Maine is a place where every student belongs. Thank you.