

Sarah Dore
Kennebunkport, Maine
May 8, 2025

Testimony Opposing LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704 (THREE MINUTE VERSION)

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

My name is **Sarah Dore**, and I am a lifelong resident of Kennebunkport, Maine. I am the mother of three children — and I am here on behalf of each of them, and on behalf of *all* of Maine's children and youth.

I rise today in **fierce and unequivocal opposition** to LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704.

I've rewritten this testimony more times than I can count, struggling to find the right words. But here's the truth: **no matter how it's framed, no matter the talking points you've been handed, these bills are not about safety, protection, or fairness.**

Let's talk about real safety. If safety in youth sports were your genuine concern, you'd be addressing Maine's concussion rates¹ or the very real dangers of hazing² — not singling out transgender and non-binary kids.

Let's talk about real protection. Protection means shielding all students from bullying, harassment, and discrimination — not passing laws that *cause* those harms³.

And fairness? Why is this suddenly up for debate? Between 2013 and 2021, the Maine Principals' Association reviewed **56** cases where transgender students sought to play on teams aligned with their gender identity. All 56 were approved.⁴ All were deemed fair and safe. **Where is the crisis you're trying to solve?**

¹ According to the Maine Department of Education's 2024 report, concussions accounted for approximately 16.7% of all high school sports injuries in the 2022–2023 academic year. [Maine State Legislature](#)

Data from 15 Maine high schools indicated that students who sustained concussions missed an average of 9.35 days of academics and 16.16 days of athletics. [Maine State Legislature](#)

² A study by the University of Maine researchers Elizabeth Allan and Mary Madden found that nearly **47% of high school students** reported experiencing hazing. This includes various activities across different school groups, with **46%** of students involved in sports teams reporting such experiences.

Despite the prevalence of hazing, many incidents go unreported. The same University of Maine study noted that **8 out of 10 students** who experienced specific hazing behaviors did not consider themselves to have been hazed, indicating a significant gap in awareness and reporting

³ Berndt Rasmussen, K. Harm and Discrimination. *Ethic Theory Moral Prac* 22, 873–891 (2019).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-018-9908-4>

⁴ MPA's official testimony to the Maine Legislature, which can be accessed here: [MPA Testimony on LD 930 \(PDF\)](#)

But you already know the truth, don't you? Research shows that **86% of transgender and non-binary youth report that political debates like this directly harm their mental health.**⁵ Let me be crystal clear: when lawmakers stand here and debate which team my child can play on, or which bathroom they can use, you're sending a devastating message — that they are *less worthy* of dignity, belonging, and equal treatment. Is this the kind of legislation and legacy as leaders you want to leave?

These bills aren't about rules or fairness. **They are about erasure, exclusion, and targeting.** They are about telling kids like mine that no matter how hard they try, they will never be enough.

When I became a mother, I braced myself for the usual worries: their health, their happiness, their future. But never — never — did I imagine I would one day have to stand here fighting for my child's **basic right to exist** in public spaces. To play on a team. To use a restroom. To be called by their name. But here I am.

If these bills pass, families like mine will face greater stigma and fear. Schools will become battlegrounds where teachers are forced to police students' bodies, out vulnerable youth, and rip away the trust every child deserves to feel in their school. And let me be clear: the harm will not stop with transgender kids. And **ANY** student who doesn't fit rigid, made-up gender stereotypes will become a target.

How exactly do you plan to enforce these cruel and unworkable rules? **Are you prepared for the consequences?**

I urge you — I **beg** you — to see these bills for what they are: a deliberate attempt to strip away the humanity and dignity of children who *just want to live*.

Reject these bills.

Protect all Maine children — including mine.

Thank you.

Sarah J. Dore
Kennebunkport, ME

⁵ **The Trevor Project (2022).** 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. Retrieved from: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/>

Testimony Opposing LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704 (TWO MINUTE VERSION)

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

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is **Sarah Dore**, and I am a lifelong resident of Kennebunkport, Maine, and the mother of three children.

I am here today in **fierce opposition** to these bills.

Let me be absolutely clear:

No matter how they're framed, these bills are **not** about safety, protection, or fairness.

If you cared about safety in youth sports, you'd be addressing concussion and hazing rates — not targeting transgender kids.

If you cared about protection, you'd be working to shield *all* students from bullying, harassment, and hazing — not passing laws that cause more harm.

And if fairness were the goal, you'd look at the facts:

Between 2013 and 2021, the Maine Principals' Association reviewed 56 cases of transgender athletes. All 56 were approved, all deemed fair and safe. There is no crisis here.

What *is* happening, though, is this:

Eighty-six percent of transgender and non-binary youth say political debates like this directly harm their mental health. When lawmakers debate which team my child can play on or which bathroom they can use, you are sending them a cruel message: That they are somehow less worthy of dignity, belonging, and equality.

These bills aren't about rules.

They are about exclusion.

They are about erasing and targeting children like mine.

When I became a mother, I braced for the usual worries: Their health, their happiness, their future. Never — never — did I imagine standing here today, fighting for my child's **basic right to exist**. But here I am.

If these bills pass, the harm won't stop with transgender kids.

You will create a climate of fear, distrust, and stigma for *any* child who doesn't fit rigid, outdated gender stereotypes.

I urge you: **Reject these bills. Protect all Maine children — including mine.**

Thank you.

Sarah Dore
Kennebunkport, ME

Opposing LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704 (ONE MINUTE VERSION)

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

Thank you for letting me speak.

My name is **Sarah Dore**, a lifelong Mainer and mother of three. I am here today to **fiercely oppose** these bills.

Let's be clear: these bills are **not** about safety, protection, or fairness. If they were, you'd focus on real dangers — like concussions or hazing — not on targeting transgender kids.

Between 2013 and 2021, 56 transgender athletes went through Maine's approval process. All were approved, all deemed fair and safe. There is no crisis.

But here's what's real:

Eighty-six percent of trans and non-binary youth say political debates like this harm their mental health. Is this the kind of legislation and legacy as leaders you want to leave? When you debate their rights, you are telling them they are less worthy of dignity, belonging, and safety.

When I became a mother, I braced myself for the usual worries: their health, their happiness, their future. But never — never — did I imagine I would one day have to stand here fighting for my child's **basic right to exist**. To play on a team. To use a restroom. To be called by their name.

But here I am.

Please: **reject these bills. Protect all Maine children — including mine.**

Thank you.

Sarah Dore
Kennebunkport, ME