

Sloan Phillips
Lewiston, Maine
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee.
Thank you for what you do for our community and for the opportunity to address you all.

My name is Sloan Phillips and I am a resident of Lewiston. I am also a trans nonbinary athlete. I have spent every summer growing up living with my grandparents in Maine, and am now a student at Bates College; Maine is my home.

I am testifying today in opposition of all the bills before the Committee. These bills pose significant risks to the foundational principles of equality and individual autonomy that our society prioritizes. I want to emphasize that the damaging impacts of these bills extend beyond the transgender community, affecting all individuals within our communities.

I have had the wonderful privilege to participate in sports my entire life and competed at the D1 level for nordic skiing during college for a year and a half. These spaces have brought me joy, community, and the opportunity to push myself as a teammate, leader, and competitor. I strongly believe that it is imperative that all young kids participate in sports. If I had not had the opportunity to be a part of a team, I would not be the individual I am today. Those of you who have had the opportunity to be a member of a team, whether it be soccer or swimming, choir or an improv group, you know how important it is to have a space where you feel welcomed and confident. Teams play such a large role in the development of a sense of self and creating relationships. This year I rejoined a team. The structured practices reminded me what a joy it is to run around with friends, the intensity of competition reminded me how deeply passionate I am, and my teammates reminded me how much capacity for love I have. This is what sport offers.

These bills affect *all* children. The surveillance of trans children means the surveillance of all children. At the root of these bills lies a fear of harmful misogyny. The solution to that should not be to further perpetuate the idea that men are inherently harmful to women; instead, we must raise the next generation to be supportive and kind to those around them.

I yearn for the days when I was confident and free. As I grew up, I began to be imprinted and engrained with the harmful idea that my actions and desires were unnatural. This is far from the case. Please, I ask you to encourage young people to be themselves, not to fold themselves into your definition of what they should be. I choose to stand in support of my trans siblings because we deserve love. We deserve the opportunity to compete. And most of all we deserve community. I ask you, please, do not take that away.

I implore you to think of the joy and personhood that you currently hold in your hands. If you vote to pass these bills, I ensure that you will crush dreams and you will take away the autonomy of all children, but if you vote not to pass them, you allow *all* children to hold on to their autonomy as people and commit to supporting joy and leadership. Set the example for your own kids, your neighbor's kids, for everyone, that children's bodies are their own, not yours, and give them an example of good leadership in a time when our country needs it most. Please, allow children to be confident and free.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills. Thank you. I am willing to answer questions.