



CHURCH AMBASSADOR NETWORK

Chairpersons Carney and Kuhn, I am Carroll Conley, director of the Church Ambassador Network, the Christian Civic League's investment in creating opportunities for Maine's leaders to be in relationship with pastors, seeking partnerships in government for the good of Maine's citizens. Thank you for allowing me to speak in support of LD 868.

The mission statement of the Christian Civic League is to bring a Biblical perspective to public policy. Indeed, a foundational premise of Christianity is that all human beings are image bearers of their Creator and therefore imperfectly but genuinely reflect the nature of God revealed in creation and scripture. Our pursuit of justice and fairness is a nearly universal manifestation of God's nature. When it comes to LD 868, we may have profound differences of opinion on how to address the issues we see arising in the last decade regarding transgender ideology; however, I share with you the same commitment to pursuing justice, fairness, and compassion.

Unfortunately, any deviation from the dominant cultural narrative regarding transgenderism right now in the US is perceived as being unfair and without compassion. However, that narrative seems to be unique to the United States. Progressive European nations that we are often told to look toward for their progress in challenges like climate change and access to health care are presently addressing the issues regarding minors and transgender treatment in a different way.

Countries like Sweden and Finland went down the same path regarding minors self-diagnosing and receiving chemical and surgical treatment without parental approval years ago. They have analyzed this approach and are greatly restricting or abandoning it. You may question **my** commitment to fairness and compassion, but I don't think any fair-minded person would accuse these progressive nations of participating in a right-wing, religious conspiracy as they wrestle with the same issues we are here. Similarly, secular courts, athletic councils, and governing bodies all over the world are recognizing that allowing biological men and boys to compete against women is not fair and, in some cases, not safe. They will no longer contribute to the evaporation of decades of progress women have fought for in the arena of athletic competition.

As part of my testimony, I submit a letter signed by/+++++ 178 Maine pastors representing over 25 denominations. Consistent with both facets of God's nature: justice and compassion, these spiritual leaders do not believe the solution to these young people's struggles with their identities includes the injustice of forcing females to compete athletically with males. I urge you to vote *ought to pass* for LD 868.