

5/6/25

Hello representatives,

My name is Samantha (Sam) LeBlanc, and I'm a mental health counselor living and working in Portland. I'm writing to share my opposition to the following bills: LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, LD 1337, LD 1432, and LD 380.

As a woman and mental health counselor, I am deeply concerned by the transphobic nature of these bills. My work focuses on people with LGBTQ+ identities, and I have an intimate knowledge of the harm these types of laws inflict on trans and cis women alike. Women are already living in fear of their rights to bodily autonomy being stripped by the current administration, and I am horrified that our state government is pursuing further infringement on our rights.

Firstly, these bills leave ALL girls vulnerable to scrutiny and harassment. These bans would invite any person to call for an invasive or traumatizing "gender check" on any girl who wants to play sports if they think she is "too tall" or "too strong." Any attempt to enforce this ban violently violates the privacy and bodily autonomy of all Maine women and girls. What is a gender check if not a genital check? How would a school respond to an intersex child, whose genitalia and literal chromosomes exist outside of the gender binary? These are not the matters of a government and a school, but of a child and their trusted caregivers.

Furthermore, these bans empower schools to police gender norms. If a trans girl does not get to play sports with other girls, is she allowed to wear a skirt? Is she allowed to play with dolls and like unicorns? Is she later allowed to like romance novels or run for student government? Where does it end? As a Samantha who has gone by Sam her entire life, it is laughable to imagine that a school somehow has the right to police a child's name. Should every Chuck be a Charles now, too? Every John a Jonathan? Who gets to decide, if not the person who has to hear the name all day, every day for the rest of their lives?

I am completely unbothered by sharing a bathroom, locker room, or sporting experience with trans women. I am incredibly bothered by my government trying to strip my rights and the rights of my trans sisters. These bills pretend to protect cis women and girls, but make no mistake: a threat to trans women is a threat to all women. **TRANS WOMEN ARE WOMEN. TRANS GIRLS ARE GIRLS.** We must ardently protect our trans Mainers.