

**Testimony of Dr. Amy Buczkowski in OPPOSITION to:**

- **LD 233, An Act to Prohibit Biological Males from Participating in School Athletic Programs and Activities Designated for Females When State Funding Is Provided to the School**
- **LD 868, An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools**
- **LD 1002, An Act to Protect Children's Identification by Requiring Public Schools to Use the Name and Gender Specified on a Child's Birth Certificate**
- **LD 1134, An Act to Prohibit Males from Participating in Female Sports or Using Female Facilities**
- **LD 1704, An Act to Prohibit a School Administrative Unit from Adopting a Policy That Allows a Student to Use a Restroom Designated for Use by the Opposite Sex**

**Committee on Judiciary**

**April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

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

My name is Dr. Amy Buczkowski, and I am a pediatric hospitalist and a resident of Freeport. I have practiced medicine in Maine for 10 years, and I submit this testimony on behalf of the Maine AAP, an organization representing pediatricians across the state of Maine. We are in strong opposition to LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704, all of which pose serious threats to the physical and mental health and safety of Maine's students.

As someone who cares for children and adolescents, I am extremely concerned by the attempts to restrict transgender girls from participating on the sports team that aligns with their gender-identity. Team sports are an important way for children to develop self-esteem and camaraderie with their peers, and playing on team sports also correlates positively with mental health, even acting as a protective factor against suicide (1). In passing these bills, you would be depriving hundreds of transgender student athletes of the social, mental, and physical health benefits that comes from participating on a sports team.

These bills target a population of children who are already at high risk of depression, self-harm, and suicide. According to data collected from the 2023 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, 51.6% of Maine transgender high school students reported seriously considering attempting suicide over the past 12 months, compared with 15.5% of their cisgender peers (2). These rates are likely high due to the persistent bullying, harassment, and social stigma that many transgender individuals experience simply for living as they truly are. The passage of these bills would likely increase the bullying and harassment of transgender youth, and isolate and ostracize them socially, potentially leading to worsened mental health and higher rates of self-harm and suicide.

Not only would these bills harm transgender students, but they would also put the safety of cisgender students at risk as well. For these bills to be enforced, students would be subjected to sex verification tests which may include a blood or DNA test, or even a genital exam. All of these methods would be an invasive violation of privacy that would lead to girls feeling less safe, secure, and respected in their school environments.

The attempts to prohibit students from using bathrooms and locker rooms would also create significant harm for transgender students. Living in accordance with your true gender identity, which includes using school facilities that align with your gender identity, or having peers and teachers refer to you by your preferred name and pronouns, is crucial for mental health. In fact, a 2021 study found that 85% of youth who face bathroom discrimination reported experiencing depressive moods, while 60% seriously considered suicide (3). Restrictive bathroom policies have also been shown to increase rates of sexual assault of transgender girls (4), and may increase higher rates of urinary tract infections and constipation among transgender youth who may avoid using the restroom entirely while at school if there is a restrictive policy in place (5). **Forcing students to use a bathroom or locker room that conflicts with their gender identity is cruel and dangerous.**

In addition, bathroom and locker room restrictions do not protect cisgender girls, despite what proponents of these policies argue. There is no evidence that letting transgender people use the facilities that align with their gender identity jeopardize the safety of cisgender women and girls (6). “Bathroom bans” are not based in fact, and they will have significant repercussions for students in Maine.

I’ve provided care to thousands of children and adolescents, and every single one is different and unique from the other. The same is true for transgender youth –no two transgender kids are the same. Therefore, passing broad brush legislation that prohibits transgender students from the simplest things --using the bathroom or playing on the sports team that aligns with their gender --is nonsensical. We should be lifting all students up, and helping them to explore their passions and interests, not restricting them based on what we assume to be true of them.

As a pediatrician, my duty is to promote the health and well-being of all children—without exception. These bills exclude and stigmatize, undermining their mental and physical health and putting them at increased risk of harm. Please prioritize connectedness and respect of all students, not exclusion and ostracization. I urge the committee to vote “Ought NOT to Pass” on LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amy Buczkowski, MD

## References:

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3. Price-Feeney M, Green AE, Dorison SH. Impact of bathroom discrimination on mental health among transgender and nonbinary youth. *J Adolesc Health*. 2021;68(6):1142-1147. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.11.001.
4. Murchison GR, Agénor M, Reisner SL, Watson RJ. School restroom and locker room restrictions and sexual assault risk among transgender youth. *Pediatrics*. 2019;143(6):e20182902. doi:10.1542/peds.2018-2902.
5. American Medical Association. *Exclusionary bathroom policies harm transgender students*. American Medical Association. Published March 10, 2021. Accessed May 7, 2025. <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/population-care/exclusionary-bathroom-policies-harm-transgender-students>
6. Ebbert S. No link between trans-inclusive policies and bathroom safety, study finds. *NBC News*. Published September 19, 2018. Accessed May 7, 2025. <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/no-link-between-trans-inclusive-policies-bathroom-safety-study-finds-n911106>