

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,
Thank you for the opportunity to address this Committee.

My name is Marie Véronique Emonds, and I am a resident of South Portland. I am here to voice my opposition to the bills before the committee today.

While several of the bills under discussion this morning are being put forward to address the issue of fairness in girls' sports in Maine, they do so in a blunt and overly broad fashion that disregards scientific evidence and in some cases extends beyond the issue of sports. While I fully support fairness in sports, there are far better ways of approaching the issue than what is proposed in these bills. A recent Portland Press Herald article noted that dozens of transgender students have participated in high school sports since 2013. Before the recent anti-transgender backlash and panic, we had been making progress in maintaining fairness in female sports while providing opportunities for transgender girls and women to participate as the gender with which they identify. Let's return to that sort of cooperative discussion.

LD 868 particularly concerns me, due to its definitions which rigidly exclude transgender individuals, and the broad areas to which it would apply. It goes far beyond attempting to ensure fairness in girls' sports. The definitions section would effectively legislate transgender people out of existence, enshrining an unscientific gender binary into Maine law and totally ignoring the existence of intersex people, which make up some 1.7% of the population.

I have particular, personal concerns regarding LD 868. I use the South Portland Community Center pool twice a week. While the Community Center is not part of the South Portland Public Schools, it is where the high school swim team practices and where high school swim meets are held. Because of this, would this law apply to the women's pool locker room at the Community Center? Since I have been swimming, there have been no incidents with my participation at the pool, despite the fact that I am a transgender woman. I am concerned that broad application of a law such as the one proposed here could prevent me from enjoying the use of the swimming pool in my community, in a Community Center that I help support through my taxes.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address this Committee.

My name is Marie Véronique Emonds, and I am a resident of South Portland. I am here to voice my opposition to LD 380.

Minors in Maine are already able to obtain reproductive health care, including contraceptives, STI testing, HIV testing, emergency contraception, and abortion care without parental consent. If we allow these things, then why not gender affirming health care in the form of hormone replacement therapy as well?

For a transgender person with gender dysphoria, going through the wrong puberty is a traumatic experience. It can lead to severe depression and even suicidal ideation. Stopping the progression of the secondary effects of puberty at the earliest possible time can help to alleviate suffering, save lives, and improve quality of life by reducing the later measures that are needed to overcome the obstacles of things like beard growth for transfeminine people or breast growth for transmasculine people.

We know that not all parents are supportive of their transgender children. Gender affirming health care is already appropriately regulated and difficult enough to obtain. I know this from personal experience. People are not handing this out without consultation.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on this bill.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address this Committee.

My name is Marie Véronique Emonds, and I am a resident of South Portland.

I am here to oppose LD 1432, which calls for the wholesale removal of gender identity from the Maine Human Rights Act. Passage of this bill into law would allow me to be subjected to discrimination in housing, employment, credit, and access to public accommodations.

Bills like LD 1432 seek to drive transgender people back into the closet, force them to detransition, and/or remove them from public life altogether. Approving such a bill would send a message to all transgender Mainers that your life is neither valued nor desired. It would have widespread and detrimental effects on the lives of every transgender individual in the state, which are unwarranted as a response to the “problem” of allowing transgender girls to compete with cisgender girls in school sports.

I also oppose LD 1337, despite that it is primarily limited to emergency shelters. I ask you, should I find myself in need of such a shelter, what am I supposed to do if the shelter can turn me away?

These bills are an assault upon the Human Rights of the transgender residents of our state. We are a marginalized group in need of protection from discrimination.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote “Ought not to Pass” on these bills.