

Beck O'Brien
South Portland, Maine
May 8, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address you.
My name is Beck O'Brien, and I am a resident of South Portland.
I am here in opposition of the bills before the committee today.
My pronouns are he/him.

The trans girls whose rights are called into question today need Maine's men to stand alongside them. We need to listen to them and to vote in the ways they tell us will brighten their futures. Today, transgender girls are clearly telling us, these bills only seek to dim their shine.

Men in the room, if you are struggling to see why voting in opposition to these bills should be important to you, I ask you to reflect on your own experiences in sports.

For me, it was baseball. I grew up bonding with my dad over catch. He taught me how to pitch, so when I joined my hometown's little league, I wanted to be a pitcher.

At our first practice, I scrambled to the mound to run drills. Immediately, I was pushed off by the other boys and told to learn how to throw from the outfield.

They hadn't even seen me pitch! It was not lack of athleticism or poor sportsmanship that led these boys to exclude me. It was because they thought I was a girl.

I called myself a tom boy, and I came out as a trans man when I was 17.

Men, do you remember how you fell in love with basketball, hockey, or football? Do you look forward to the Saturday you and your kids spend at Hadlock Field?

Inclusivity in sports is something I urge you to take a stand for today, in part because I know being made to feel like the odd one out on a team isn't an experience unique to trans girls.

The difference is, news of your cisgender child striking out a batter is too mundane to get national attention. Make today a step towards a future where the same could be said for trans girls' playing on the girls team.

I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass."

Thank you!

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I am here in opposition of the bills before the committee today.
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I am a trans man. I moved to Maine in 2023 seeking a safe and accepting community, which I found in Portland. Recently, I thought: "I could live here for the rest of my life."

Maine has a reputation for being a place where people can be themselves.

In 2024, the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development and the Maine Department of Labor had a study conducted for them by Wallace Economic Advisers titled "Why People Move to Maine: A Study of Recent Migrants."*

26% of respondents reported "having a culture that values equity, acceptance, and openness strongly influenced their decision to move to Maine."*

I know you are already familiar with the core goal of Maine's 10-year economic development strategy: "attracting population and workforce talent" in order "to mitigate the effects of an aging population and projected workforce deficits."*

Maine's economy cannot afford detracting new workers with changes to the Maine Human Rights Act like this. Changes that create inequity and promote exclusivity.

As the only state with more residents age 65 or older than 18 or younger,** Maine also needs to focus on *ensuring* young Mainers see a life for themselves here post-high school graduation.

The bills presented today provide reason for Maine's trans youth and allies to emigrate elsewhere. Not only does targeting our young residents by demographic go against Maine's values, but it also poses risk to Maine's economic future. Risks Maine simply cannot afford to take.

I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass."

Thank you!

Sources:

*Wallace Economic Advisers, LLC. "Why People Move to Maine: a Study of Recent Migrants." Jan. 2025.

<https://www.maine.gov/decd/sites/maine.gov.decd/files/inline-files/WHY%20PEOPLE%20MOVE%20TO%20MAINE.pdf>

**Trutor, Clayton. "The State of Aging in the Nation's Oldest State." Feb. 24, 2025.

<https://www.nextavenue.org/state-aging-in-oldest-state-maine/>