

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Sofia Pride, and I am from Falmouth, Maine. I am here today to speak in support of LD 2239, "An Act to Designate School Sports Participation and Facilities by Sex."

There are many ways I describe myself. I'm a freshman at the University of Maine, a caring friend, a proud older sister, and someone who is always willing to learn and grow. When I think about my past, I'm especially proud of my time as a swimmer. I competed in both school and club swimming, and I cared so much about the sport that I built my schedule around it; training, weightlifting, and even helping coach younger swimmers.

Because of that experience, I know how much sports matter. They are not just about winning; they are about discipline, confidence, teamwork, and personal growth.

That being said, one category I cannot clearly distinguish under the Maine Human Rights Act are my rights as a female and, moreover, a female athlete. In Maine, decisions about access to sports and facilities are not always based on biological sex, and that creates uncertainty and concern for many female athletes.

Some may say this distinction does not create real issues, but from my perspective, it does. During high school, I had to share a bathroom with a biological male for nearly a year. I have friends who have had similar experiences in locker rooms. I also know of a team that lost a state championship after points were earned by an athlete who was biologically male. These experiences affect how safe, fair, and respected students feel in their own environments.

For many female athletes, sports are one of the few spaces where fairness and equal opportunity are clearly defined. When those standards become unclear, it can impact confidence, participation, and the integrity of competition.

I understand that this is a complex and sensitive issue, and I believe it is important to approach it with respect for all individuals. At the same time, it is equally important to ensure that policies are clear, fair, and consistent for everyone involved.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support LD 2239.

Thank you for your time and consideration.