

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Judiciary Committee.

I am Heidi Sampson, former State Rep. from Alfred. I am the co-lead petitioner of the Protect Girls' Sports in Maine Ballot Committee and Executive Director of the Maine Education Initiative. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today in support of this important legislation, LD 2239 "An Act to Designate School Sports Participation and Facilities by Sex".

At its core, this bill is about something simple, reasonable, and deeply rooted in both law and common sense: fairness, safety, and equal opportunity for all students.

For more than 50 years, federal law—specifically Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972—has recognized that biological differences between males and females matter in athletics. That recognition is not discrimination; it is the very foundation of equal opportunity for girls and women.

This bill reinforces that principle.

By ensuring that teams designated for girls are reserved for biological females, we are protecting the integrity of women's sports—sports that generations fought hard to establish. Without these protections, we risk erasing the very opportunities Title IX was designed to create.

This legislation also addresses privacy—another fundamental right.

Requiring separate locker rooms, restrooms, and private facilities based on sex is not radical. It is how schools have responsibly operated for decades. These spaces exist for dignity, modesty, and safety—especially for young students navigating vulnerable and formative years.

Importantly, this bill does not ignore or exclude anyone.

It explicitly provides protections and accommodations for individuals with medically verifiable differences in sex development, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It also ensures alignment with the Maine Human Rights Act, clarifying that reasonable, sex-based distinctions in athletics and private spaces are lawful and appropriate.

This is a balanced, thoughtful approach.

It respects the rights of all students while preserving fairness in competition, safety in physical spaces, and clarity in the law. It also provides a clear enforcement mechanism, ensuring that students who are harmed have a path to seek justice.

And just as importantly, it allows time for schools to implement these policies responsibly, with an effective date of January 1, 2027.

This is not about politics. It is about protecting opportunities for girls, maintaining safe environments for all students, and ensuring Maine's laws remain clear, consistent, and fair.

I urge you to support this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.