

Good afternoon,

My name is Jacqueline Priestly, and I'm from Freeport. I'm also a mom to two young daughters. They're not yet in school sports, and only one of them currently attends school but thankfully one that does not allow gender-neutral bathrooms. But as they grow, they will likely be in these environments. And when that time comes, this issue will directly affect them.

That's why I'm here.

It matters to me that my girls—and girls across our state and our nation—have the opportunity to fairly participate in sports, a right protected under Title IX which was created to ensure this equal opportunity. But beyond fairness in sports, what matters even more to me is their safety... and their sense of dignity in private spaces.

Right now, Maine's current approach is asking one very large group—women and girls—to set aside their own comfort, privacy, and sense of safety in order to accommodate the needs of a much smaller group.

No one should be forced into discomfort. That's why we should be looking for solutions that support everyone—without asking one group to carry the weight of that solution alone, especially when it comes at the cost of their safety... the very thing we're supposed to be protecting.

And when we're talking about young girls—when we're talking about spaces that are inherently private and vulnerable—that's not something we should dismiss in the name of anything. It's not something we should normalize. And it's certainly not something we should require of them.

Many of us here have made these concerns known. We've attended school board meetings, submitted testimony, and signed petitions to bring this issue to the ballot in November.

And that brings us to why we're here today.

We're here to discuss the wording of that ballot question—the very question we worked so hard to put in front of Maine voters.

As it is currently written, it does not clearly or neutrally represent the intent of the legislation. Instead, it frames the issue in a way that risks confusing voters or discouraging support.

At its core, this bill is simple. It is not malicious. It is intended to restore clarity around sex-based protections so that girls can have fair opportunities and feel safe in the spaces designed for them.

For something this important, voters deserve clarity. They deserve accuracy. And they deserve language that informs—not influences.

As a mother, I'm asking you to consider the long-term impact of these decisions—not just in policy, but in the lived experiences of young girls growing up in our schools.

Thank you for your time.