



Testimony of Dr. Brian Youth in Opposition to LD 2239, An Act to Designate School Sports Participation and Facilities by Sex

April 14, 2026

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30 Association Drive, Box 190

Manchester, ME 04351

207-622-3374

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

My name is Dr. Brian Youth, and I am a resident of Scarborough as well as a pediatrician and the current President of the Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (Maine AAP). We are a membership organization of 300 pediatricians and subspecialists who are dedicated to improving the lives of children and adolescents in Maine. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to the proposed ballot measure, LD 2239.

As someone who has provided care to pediatric patients and families for over 30 years, I can say with confidence that no two children are the same. They each have their own unique personalities, physical abilities, strengths, and challenges that can't be explained by gender and sex alone. However, this proposed measure seeks to apply a one-size-fits-all approach to every child in Maine - dictating who they are and what they can do based only on biological sex and jeopardizing the mental and physical health and safety of transgender youth in the process.

Sports teams are a great way for youth to get physical activity, socialize outside of the classroom, and develop self-esteem, teamwork, and leadership skills. Excluding transgender students from participating on the sports teams that align with their gender identity deprives an already vulnerable population of important social interactions and positive experiences. According to the 2025 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, 43% of transgender high school students reported seriously considering attempting suicide in the past 12 months, compared with 11% of their non-transgender (cisgender) peers (1). This alarming statistic demonstrates the need for additional protective factors, like inclusive sports teams, that help transgender students to feel affirmed and valued, not isolated and ostracized.

This proposal also restricts youth from using school facilities that correspond with their gender identities. Despite claims that these policies protect women and girls, there is no documented evidence to suggest that restrictive bathroom policies make schools safer for anyone. However, such policies *do* impact the health of transgender students, leading to depression and suicidal thoughts (2), and put transgender students at higher risk of sexual assault (3). In addition, these types of policies force transgender students to make an impossible choice: either face a humiliating and potentially dangerous situation by using a facility that conflicts with their gender identity, or violate the policy and face punishment. As a result, many transgender youth avoid using the bathroom altogether, resulting in higher rates of UTIs and constipation among transgender youth who attend schools with restroom and locker room restrictions (4). The evidence and anecdotes from schools that have adopted these policies is clear: these policies do not

provide safety, they expose students to harm.

As a pediatrician, I can think of a myriad of policies we could pass to improve school safety and ensure fairness among students. This proposed ballot measure will do neither and will instead put the health and safety of transgender students at greater risk. For this reason and many others, I am opposed to LD 2239.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony.

Brian Youth, MD
President
Maine AAP