



Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
LD 2239 An Act to Designate School Sports Participation and Facilities by Sex
April 14, 2026

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Members of the Committee:

I am Jane Field, Executive Director of the Maine Council of Churches (a coalition of seven mainline Protestant denominations with over 400 congregations and more than 50,000 parishioners in Maine)...

And I don't want to be here. Because it might imply that I or the Council believe it's legitimate to debate the humanity, dignity, and rights of our fellow human beings, our trans siblings. This would contradict what's central to the Christian* faith—the belief that **every person is a beloved child of God, that to treat them as anything less is an affront to their Creator, and that we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves.**

Proponents of this appalling referendum will likely say **they're not debating trans people's humanity, they're just "trying to protect girls and women."**

But beneath the surface of that argument you'll find **contempt for trans people, a hatred fueled by fear, not facts, and certainly not by faith.**

The Maine Council of Churches stands up to protect Maine's girls and women—that's why we've shown up this Session to fight for funding for our state's sexual assault and domestic violence programs. Where were anti-trans advocates during *those* hearings? **If they truly were concerned about the safety of girls and women, they'd focus on the real threats, you know, the ones that come from straight, cisgender men. Because that's who harasses, abuses, assaults, rapes and kills girls and women. Trans girls do not.** They just want to play sports with their classmates and use bathrooms and locker rooms where *they* won't be assaulted.

This referendum was never about protecting Maine's girls and women. It's about reaching a base who can be rallied by fear and hatred of a small group of vulnerable people.

But the bible and God are clear about hatred and fear: God *loves* and stands with the vulnerable, persecuted and oppressed and expects us to love and stand with them, too. And over and over again, throughout the bible, God says to humanity, "Do not be afraid."

Thus, a referendum fueled by fear and hatred contradicts these biblical teachings. And it contradicts the national policies of the five Christian denominations on our Council (Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist) that affirm the sacred worth and full welcome, inclusion, and dignity of transgender and non-binary individuals, declare them beloved by God, and seek to protect them from discrimination.

As I said, I really don't want to be here. But to **cede this ground to those persecuting our vulnerable neighbors and stoking fear and hatred among everyone else is not an option. My faith, and the faith espoused by members of the Maine Council of Churches, compels me to be here standing with and for trans kids.**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to do so.

*The Maine Council of Churches includes Unitarian Universalists and Quakers, but today I will limit my remarks to the teaching of our five Protestant Christian denominations because I know that the testimony of my colleague, the Rev. Dr. Jodi Hayashida of Multifaith Justice Maine, a Unitarian Universalist minister and member of the MCC Board of Directors, will address the broader landscape of faith traditions.