



Committee on the Judiciary

LD 2239 – By Gia Drew of EqualityMaine and on behalf of the LGBTQ+ Legislative Coalition

April 14, 2026

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Gia Drew, and I am the Executive Director of EqualityMaine, which has been advocating on behalf of Maine's LGBTQ+ population for forty two years. I'm here today on behalf of Maine's LGBTQ+ Legislative Coalition, which includes American Academy of Pediatrics, Maine Chapter, GLAD LAW, Mabel Wadsworth, Maine Council on Aging, MaineTransNet, OUT Maine, and Portland Outright.

In those forty two years, our proud and beautiful community, which lives, works, and dies, in virtually every town in Maine, has become a more visible and important part of the fabric that makes Maine such a special place that we all call home. Because of grassroots efforts, hundreds of thousands of door to door conversations, phone calls, steadfast advocacy, education, and increased visibility, Mainers now see and know LGBTQ+ people as trusted family members, neighbors, friends, co-workers, peers, classmates, teammates, political leaders, community partners, fellow congregants, and so much more.

I'm also here testifying on behalf of Maine's LGBTQ+ community, which according to recent data includes 7% of adults¹ and 25% of teenagers.² That's roughly 120,000 Mainers. This voluminous population and lovely allies, and partner organizations, vigorously reject this attempt to roll back 20 years of civil rights protections for LGBTQ+ people, particularly trans youth, arguably the most vulnerable members of our community.

Collectively we oppose LD 2239, An Act to Designate School Sports Participation and Facilities by Sex, including the adjoining citizen initiative, which is an affront to Maine values and a vicious attack on kids, rolling back decades of progress that have made Maine one of the most welcoming and inclusive states in the country. This bill and the initiative will make Maine's schools less safe, less fair, and more dangerous for all kids. This bill does not address the real issues most Mainers are concerned about in our daily lives, like the cost of healthcare, the cost of food and fuel, the cost of housing, substance use, the climate, or workforce development, to name a few.

¹ <https://www.axios.com/2024/02/15/lgbt-american-communities-states-data>

² <https://www.maine.gov/miyhs/2023-results>

This bill and the initiative is an attempt to turn back time, allowing for and encouraging the treatment of transgender students as second class citizens. This is an attempt to dig-up settled law, issues this committee, the legislature, the public, and the courts in Maine have confronted over decades, and have historically decided time and time again, to affirm the dignity and humanity of transgender people, whether we're talking about kids participating in school activities like sports and where youth go to the bathroom, because it's best for kids, schools, and families.

What this bill attempts to do is target a small and special part of our community, transgender people, and what's worse, they're attacking trans kids, for political gains. But what is often missed in this conversation, is what the impact will be, not only on trans, non-binary kids, and intersex children, but on siblings, friends, teammates, and parents, and for the kids who don't fit narrow and unrealistic versions of what boys and girls may look like. This bill invites unwanted surveillance of children and kids' bodies, allowing for people to challenge and threaten kids' autonomy and agency to exist freely at school. And because this bill includes a right of civil action for damages and attorney's fees against a school or entity, what's to prevent unscrupulous parents from wreaking havoc against local schools based only on suspicion and hearsay? Nothing.

I believe you're going to do the right thing and oppose enacting this bill, and I have to be hopeful that Mainers will see through the fog of disinformation presented by the proponents of this initiative, because I believe we all care about kids. It's not only the right thing to do, it's the moral thing to do.

Thank you,

Gia Drew (she/her)
Executive Director, EqualityMaine