

Gabrielle Stevens
FREEPORT
LD 537

Edmund Muskie said that the spirit of Maine is of a people that understand that “there’s no point in speaking unless you can improve on silence.” It is vitally important that the Maine people – Maine’s adults – speak now to protect our children from public attacks that put our children, their families, their schools, and our communities in very real and lasting danger.

Recently, Republican State Rep. Laurel Libby used an uncensored photo of a Maine child to advance her political career. Rep. Libby posted this photo of a minor, showing both their face and their body, identifying them by name and town, without parental consent. No matter where one stands on any hot-button political issue, no child should be made the subject of a public, partisan attack. Ever.

Rep. Libby represents a small portion of our state’s population and prior to her public doxing of this child had no national spotlight or audience. She now has been invited to speak on national networks like Fox News, and others. She now has opened new avenues of campaign contributions for herself that she did not enjoy before. These political advancements are not based on merit. They are not based on hard work on behalf of her constituents. They are the result of exposing a minor child to very real and harmful vitriol and the potential for violence, on a national and international scale.

Maine people are better than using children to stroke fear and anger for personal gain, political or otherwise. It is sad that a bill like LD 537 must be introduced. There should not be any need to authorize new civil actions on behalf of children who have been publicly shamed, because the public shaming and exploitation of children should never take place. It has taken place though, and now a disturbing precedent has been set, especially as Rep. Libby has not even been censured for her actions.

The internet is forever. This child’s personal information, and their face, is now publicly available for the rest of their lives (and beyond). This child has been subjected to threats to their safety and their family’s safety, they have been subjected to despicable personal attacks online by adults both in and outside of our state, and they have been made a target in a very real and lasting way. What did they do to deserve this? They played a sport that Rep. Libby personally believes they shouldn’t have played. That’s it.

As a proud citizen of our great state, a parent to a minor child, and a member of the Maine Bar, I fully support LD 537 and efforts to protect minor children from the types of dangerous and lasting activities that Rep. Libby has engaged in.

Thank you.

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