

Alex Bohan
Belfast, Maine
May 8, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion on this matter. My name is Alex Bohan, and I am a resident of Belfast. I have post-graduate training in Social Work through the University of Maine and the University of Michigan. I am writing to voice my strong opposition to all of the bills before the committee today.

I moved to Maine as an adult, in my 30s. It was the first place I had lived (and I had lived in many places) where I felt a sense of belonging in a community. The diversity of Portland was the fabric of that community. Something about the kindness, the acceptance, the diversity deeply impacted me. It somehow allowed me to understand that I was transgender. I then had to go through the terrifying process of risking all of these new relationships – and all of my old ones – by revealing what felt like the most private and shameful aspect of my existence to the world. It was an act of bravery that I really cannot begin to convey to anyone who has not had to do it. I was met with nothing but kindness and acceptance. I am not exaggerating when I say that the people of Maine taught me what it means to love myself, and to return that love to the community through compassionate action. Since then, I have been working in the field of social work, aiming to provide that sense of unequivocal acceptance and support to others. In the face on increasing attacks on my right to exist from the national stage, I have been heartened, time and again, to see that the majority of Mainers still believe in allowing their neighbors to exist however they are happiest, and still believe in standing up for each other. The bills being discussed today fill me with terror – maybe I’m not safe here? Maybe this place that taught me so much is changing. Maybe people do not have the capacity to see me, and others like me, as just people, like anyone else, who want to love themselves and see themselves accepted and supported and loved by the people around them.

I grew up as a girl, playing a lot of sports. I played on some teams which were designated for girls, some which were co-ed, and, in high school, the boys’ soccer team, along with one other girl. At no point was the gender composition of the teams an issue: we were simply kids who wanted to play on a team, playing with other kids. I think that team sports for children, at their best, provide the same sense of acceptance, support, and belonging that I have experienced here in Maine. That, I think, is their ultimate value. Allowing children to experience this as they actually are is a kind of magic, which sews them into the fabric of community, of belonging, creating lifelong bonds of care.

These are my personal thoughts on the matter of sports. The bills which go beyond sports are more alarming, because they begin the process of eroding the basic human rights of myself and those like me. What actual issue has occurred because of a trans person in the restroom? We are – again – just people, and we need to use the restroom like everyone else. The only issue I have ever seen reported is trans and gender-nonconforming people being harassed in bathrooms, which seems to happen on a daily basis. These bills would open the door to more harassment, by anyone who feels someone’s gender is “suspicious.” It would place the support of the State behind that harassment. It is a kind of

Alex Bohan
Belfast, Maine
May 8, 2025

terrorizing of LGBTQ+ people, as we become ever more afraid to simply exist in the world, ever less certain that anyone would protect us if we were threatened.

I know that I am probably best advised to provide you with facts and figures and statistics. There are two (2!) trans children playing sports in Maine. They are not dominating. There were under ten playing nationally at the collegiate level. They were not dominating. No one at the professional level is dominating, either. There are good, reasonable scientific explanations for the this, which I have no doubt others will provide. On the issue of restrooms and other facilities: there is no issue. There are no reports of problems. On the issue of schools supporting children's self-identification and exploration of identity, and of medical providers supporting older teenagers right to self-determination, there is an abundance of research showing the benefits. As to removing gender identity from the MHRA – these bills themselves prove the point that transgender people are being attacked as a class.

I thank you for your time and attention, and implore the Committee to recognize these attacks on our personhood for what they are, and take a stand against these efforts to divide the community through dehumanizing its most vulnerable members.

Sincerely,

Alex Bohan
Belfast, ME