

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee today.

My name is Stacie Bourassa and I live in Biddeford, Maine. I am a third-generation Mainer, a board member of PFLAG Portland Maine, and the parent of an adult trans child. I was also a student athlete, and I'd go so far as to say that basketball saved me as a middle and high schooler. It kept me focused despite domestic violence, poverty, and my parents' divorce—it was my north star.

So when my son, labeled female at birth, played sports as a child my husband and I coached his teams whether it was soccer, basketball or track. But in high school, where sports became gendered, he no longer felt he belonged. There were no gender-neutral locker rooms or restrooms in his high school at that time, and he wasn't comfortable in girls' spaces. He had faced harassment and bullying from his peers and teachers just for being part of the LGBTQ community. So, he walked away from athletics.

I, too, quit basketball in high school—not because of trans teammates, but because I relied on others for transportation, namely my male coach. Girls' games and practices were always scheduled after the boys picked their ideal times and we often didn't have funding for buses. And I didn't have parents who would give me rides.

On one trip home, my coach suggested we run away together, half joking while further pressing me about what my favorite drink was. He had invited me back to his apartment a few times, which I managed to avoid, but I remember turning in my uniform in a paper Hannaford bag that season when I got tired of dealing with it all. I was 16 at the time.

If you want to protect female athletes, fund shuttle buses for example, actually make programs safer— don't ban their teammates. Trans kids in sports is a red herring. If it were truly a problem, we would have heard about it decades ago. We already have systems in place that are working. What these bills aim to do is send the message that trans youth should not exist and do not belong.

Some people want to argue whether trans girls are girls (they are). No matter where you fall on that topic, they're just kids. And just like any kids, trans kids deserve to be treated as individuals, not erased.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. After today and listening to our stories, you should have no question about the consequences of your vote. **I urge you to vote “Ought not to Pass” on these bills, including LDs 233, 1134, 868, 1704, and 1002.**