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LD 868

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee.

My name is Anne Callender and I am a resident of Portland, and I am writing on behalf of humanity and protecting the most vulnerable.

I am in opposition of the bills before the committee today.

I can't think of anything more vile than enacting laws to discriminate against children and in turn teaching them how to be disrespectful of others. Schools should be places that foster community, respect, kindness, empathy and compassion. The key components of safe environments for education and growth. Not all children or people are the same, and we all have different needs. These bills are not fixing a problem, they are creating space for bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Biology is not black or white, there are many colors in the crayon box. As much as some folks want to proclaim there are only two sexes, that's not reality. Maine understands this reality and adopted protections for gender identity in 2005. For the happiness and safety for everyone, we need to keep it that way.

Relying on stereotypes that male bodies are stronger or more athletic than any female body is pathetic and untrue. People come in all sizes and physical abilities. Children grow at different rates while they are developing into adults. In 8th grade, I was able to arm wrestle boys in my class and win. I was fully grown by the time I was 17 but my husband at 17 was 6 inches shorter than he is as an adult. Athletic success isn't a given on any given day. The complaints that allowing transgender girls to participate in girl's sports is somehow unfair doesn't take into account that sports aren't inherently fair because of so many factors. I wonder if the boy's basketball teams felt it was fair to have to play against Cooper Flagg with his extraordinary skills.

What will truly be unfair is girls and women needing to prove their gender to use a bathroom or changing room. Or people not getting medical care that they want. How amazingly disgusting and degrading, and a violation of privacy laws. These bills will be forcing and enforcing "gender norms" that patriarchal societies like to use to keep men and women in boxes and police women's bodies. Everyone deserves respect and privacy. Don't legalize bigotry and discrimination.

If the sponsors of this bill think that having "biological males" in girls bathrooms and housing unsafe, then let's look closer at violence and how patriarchal masculinity breeds violence towards women and truly do something to protect women. Raise boys to be empathetic and kind humans as well as strong, courageous, and independent men.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills. Don't let hate have a home here in Maine.