

Testimony before the Judiciary Committee on LD 233, 1134, and 868- 5/8/25

Good Morning Senator Carne, Representative Kuhn and members of the committee.

My name is Amy Coha, and my personal pronouns are she/hers. I am a registered voter and have lived in Maine for thirty years. I'm speaking to you because I am a social worker and have a transgender niece. I know both professionally and personally the harm that these bills will cause for transgender students and their families. I am well aware of the violence transgender youth experience simply by having the courage to live their lives authentically.

LD 233, LD 1134 will ban transgender students from school sports and LD 868 explicitly bans trans and non-binary students from using bathrooms and locker rooms that align with their gender identity. The debate over bathrooms and gender identify has long been settled in Maine. LD 868 is rolling back the clock nearly 15 years.

Bathroom bans are not about privacy or safety. They are motivated by ignorance, misinformation and fear. Transgender people are already using the bathrooms they have a right to, and doing so without incident.

These bills will end decades of protections for LGBTQ+ students, and also be negatively impacted by the possibility that they may be forced to submit to a physical examination to determine their gender identity. Permitting physical exams to determine if a female student is transgender violates their bodily autonomy and right to privacy and is abusive. This legislation will have a chilling effect on all students who choose to participate in school sports. Transgender students already face harassment, bullying and violence. These bills will add to the discrimination transgender students face by denying them the same rights other students have in participating in sports.

The argument that transgender girls have an advantage in sports has been disproven by academic research. (Turban, Jack, (2021) *Trans Girls Belong on Girls' Sport Teams, Scientific American*)." The Olympics have had trans-inclusive policies since 2004.

Transgender students are currently protected by the Maine Human Rights Act that in 2005 included gender identity under the definition of sexual orientation, ensuring that all students can participate fully in school life – including schools sports without fear of discrimination. Transgender students and their families are entitled to the same respect and access to school activities, free from harassment and discrimination that other students enjoy.

Please vote NO on, LD 233, 1134, and 868, as well as the legislation against Gender Affirming Care. By voting no you will be following the Maine Human Rights Act and demonstrating that transgender students, like all students, deserve the right to participate in school sports without fear of harassment and violence.

Thank you.

Amy Coha
South Portland
LD 1134

Good Morning Chairperson Carney, Representative Kuhn and Members of the Committee:

My name is Amy Coha, and my personal pronouns are she/hers. I am a registered voter and have lived in Maine for 30 years. I'm speaking to you because I am a social worker and have a transgender niece. I know both professionally and personally the harm that these bills will cause for transgender students and their families. I am well aware of the violence transgender youth experience simply by having the courage to live their lives authentically.

LD 233, LD 1134 will ban transgender students from school sports and LD 868 explicitly bans trans and non-binary students from using bathrooms and locker rooms that align with their gender identity. The debate over bathrooms and gender identity has long been settled in Maine. LD 868 is rolling back that clock nearly 15 years. Bathroom bans are not about privacy or safety. They are motivated by ignorance, misinformation and fear. Transgender people are already using the bathrooms they have a right to, and doing so without incident.

These bills will end decades of protections for LGBTQ+ students, and also be negatively impacted by the possibility that they may be forced to submit to a physical examination to determine sexual identity. Permitting physical exams to determine if a female student is transgender violates her bodily autonomy and right to privacy and is abusive. This legislation will have a chilling effect on all students who choose to participate in school sports. Transgender students already face harassment, bullying and violence. These bills will add to the discrimination transgender students face by denying them the same rights other students have in participating in sports.

The argument that transgender girls have an advantage in sports has been disproven by academic research. An article in Scientific American (2021) by Jack Turban entitled: "Trans Girls Belong on Girls Sport Teams, addresses this myth. In addition, the Olympics have had trans-inclusive policies since 2004.

Transgender students are currently protected by the Maine Human Rights Act that in 2005 included gender identity under the definition of sexual orientation, ensuring that all students can participate fully in school life--including school sports without fear of discrimination. Transgender students and their families are entitled to the same respect and access to school activities, free from harassment and discrimination, that other students enjoy.

Please vote No on, LD 233, 1134, 868 and the legislation banning gender affirming care this afternoon.

By voting Ought not to be passed out of committee you will be following the Maine Human Rights Act and demonstrating that transgender students, like all students, deserve the right to participate in school sports and use the bathroom that fits with their gender identity without fear of harassment and violence.