

Jennifer Cowing
Kennebunk, ME
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee.

My name is Jenny Cowing. I'm a resident of Kennebunk.

I am writing today in opposition to all of the Transgender bills before the committee, consisting of bills LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, LD 1337, LD 1432, and LD 380

I am against all of these bills, but I'm focusing this writing specifically on the sports aspect.

I was born in the 70's. I grew up in a lower income household with alcoholic parents. I worked hard, graduated in the top 10% of my high school class, went on to graduate college, joined the Army and today I am a successful Software Engineer, Veteran and Adult.

I believe with all my heart that none of that would have been possible without being able to play sports growing up. Volleyball in the fall, swimming in the summer and winter and Softball/track in the spring. Being able to play on sports teams not only taught me how to be a better person, but it gave me the grounding needed to be able to travel my successful path. All individuals should have these same opportunities in a nurturing and safe environment.

All the bills today seek to restrict a part of the population, which in the end would lead to negative results:

The Bills Harm Mental Health and Well-Being

Transgender individuals—particularly young people—already face high rates of anxiety, depression, and suicide due to societal rejection. Laws that ban bathroom access or exclude them from sports only add to this burden, denying them safe spaces and affirming experiences that are critical to healthy development.

The Bills Undermine Equal Opportunity

In schools and communities, sports offer critical opportunities for teamwork, confidence-building, and social belonging. Transgender youth deserve those opportunities just like anyone else. Excluding them creates a two-tiered system where equal participation is denied based on identity.

The Bills Set a Dangerous Precedent

When governments begin carving out exceptions to civil rights protections for one group, it opens the door to a broader erosion of rights for others. Protecting transgender rights is about maintaining a just and equitable society for all people, regardless of gender, race, or background.

I also believe that these bills will harm cis youths:

These Bills have Invasive “Gender Policing” which will Affect Everyone

To enforce these laws, schools may be required to verify a student’s sex through medical or physical exams. This means cis girls—especially those who are more athletic, tall, muscular, or don’t conform to traditional gender norms—could be accused of being transgender and subjected to invasive testing or public scrutiny.

These Bills Create a Culture of Suspicion and Surveillance

These laws foster an environment where girls are judged not by skill or effort, but by how closely they fit someone’s idea of femininity. Cis girls may be unfairly targeted or questioned, creating anxiety and discouraging participation in sports.

A Majority of these Bills Shift the Focus Away from Real Equity Issues

Instead of addressing genuine barriers to girls’ participation in sports—like lack of funding, poor access to coaching, or fewer opportunities—these laws divert attention to a manufactured controversy, leaving all girls worse off.

I believe that these bills would leave ALL girls vulnerable to scrutiny and harassment

- These bans would invite any person to call for an invasive or traumatizing “gender check” on any girl who wants to play sports if they think she is “too tall” or “too strong.”
- Bans embolden spectators, community members, and fellow competitors to bully and harass girls by accusing them of being trans. If these bills pass, they will become another weapon for bullies to use against girls in Maine.
- Any attempt to enforce this ban blatantly violates the privacy of all Maine women and girls.
- These bans empower schools to engage in policing adherence to gender norms, which unfairly scrutinizes girls’ bodies, and have been shown to affect girls of color even more. These bans will cause fear, distrust, and confusion for students, families, and educators.

I am thankful every day that I grew up in a time when I was able to play sports, and I can only hope that all kids will be as lucky as I was.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote “Ought not to Pass” on these bills.

Thank you,
Jennifer Cowing