

Jessica Damico
Pine Tree United
LD 233

Testimony Against LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, and LD 1704

Jessica D'Amico

Belfast, ME

May 8, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. I am writing in opposition to the bills before this committee today.

Two transgender athletes in the entire state of Maine — that's who these bills are targeting. We are choosing to spend our time debating their participation in school life while our federal programs are being gutted, our economy is under threat, and civil liberties are being trampled. Yet somehow this is being framed as an emergency. But that is beside the point.

Before this committee enacts legislation based on assumptions about athletic advantage, I urge you to consider Patricio "Pat" Manuel, a transgender male boxer who transitioned, trained, and went on to win multiple professional fights against cisgender men. Would these bills have forced Pat to fight women — or use the women's locker room? That would not only have been unfair, it would have posed safety and dignity concerns for everyone involved.

These bills rest on the false idea that gender identity itself is a threat. But in reality, trans athletes take hormones under medical supervision that often diminish — not enhance — physical advantages. Testosterone suppression in trans women significantly reduces muscle mass and strength over time. Trans men taking testosterone develop characteristics that make competition with cis women inequitable. Science does not support blanket bans based on birth sex. It supports nuanced, individualized approaches rooted in fairness, medical ethics, and compassion.

Let's not forget who we are talking about: these are kids. According to The Trevor Project's 2023 National Survey, over half of transgender and nonbinary youth have seriously considered suicide. One in five attempted it. These aren't abstract numbers. They reflect the very real consequences of marginalization, rejection, and fear — much of it coming from adults who were supposed to protect them.

These laws do not protect anyone. They single out trans kids for exclusion and humiliation. They create hostile environments where students feel unsafe being who they are. They do not make schools safer — they make them crueler.

And make no mistake: this is not about fairness. It is political theater being used as a distraction tactic. As John Oliver recently pointed out, over \$116 million was spent last year by Republican campaigns on TV ads targeting transgender athletes — an enormous investment of time and money into vilifying a group that makes up a tiny fraction of student-athletes. There is no epidemic of trans athletes dominating sports. What we are seeing is an epidemic of adults trying to legislate kids out of existence. No one chooses to be transgender for an advantage. There is no incentive to endure the bullying, the isolation, the loss of family, friends, and safety that so often accompanies a trans identity in this country. These children are not confused. They are not predators. They are not a problem to solve. They are human beings — and they are asking us to see them, to hear them, and to let them live.

Let us not be remembered as the generation that turned away from children in pain simply because we didn't understand them. Let us be remembered as the ones who chose compassion, science, and humanity over fear and scapegoating. I ask that you vote against these bills.

Sincerely,
Jessica D'Amico