

Emma DayBranch
Albany
LD 233

To: Judiciary Committee

From: Emma DayBranch 147 Crooked River Causeway, Albany Maine

Date: May 8, 2025

RE: Testimony in opposition of L.D. 233 “An Act to Prohibit Biological Males from Participating in School Athletic Programs and Activities Designated for Females When State Funding is Provided to the School”

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Emma DayBranch, and I am a resident of Albany, Maine, a health professional, and a proud member of this community. I write to urge you to oppose L.D. 233, “An Act to Prohibit Biological Males from Participating in School Athletic Programs and Activities Designated for Females When State Funding is Provided to the School.”

As someone who grew up attending Maine public schools and now works as a health professional, I know the harm caused by policies that single out and stigmatize students based on gender. Bills like L.D. 233 do not protect girls—they put all girls at risk of invasive scrutiny, harassment, and bullying. As a student in rural Maine, I had close friends who experienced bullying and hardship in school and at home sometimes due to stigma around gender and sexual identity. These harms are not only painful in the moment but have lasting health impacts – ie higher risk for depression, substance use, and chronic illnesses. For many of us, this is not anecdotal. These numbers speak to our own experiences and those of friends and family.

The proposed bans embolden spectators, community members, and fellow competitors to bully and harass girls. If these bills pass, they will become another weapon for bullies to use against girls in Maine. Additionally, 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. These bans will cause fear, distrust, and confusion for students, families, and educators. Instead of fostering fairness, L.D. 233 would embolden bullies and create new barriers for students who already face challenges.

The issues of sports participation are already being handled appropriately by the correct organizations and governing associations to ensure fairness. Changes to Maine law are unnecessary and help no one. For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to reject this legislation. Let us build schools that are safe and supportive for every student.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Emma DayBranch