

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,  
Thank you for the opportunity to address this Committee.

My name is Marie Véronique Emonds, and I am a resident of South Portland. I am writing here to oppose LD 233 and LD 1134.

While these bills are being put forward to address the issue of fairness in girls' sports competitions in Maine, they do so in a blunt and overly broad fashion that disregards scientific evidence and in many cases extends far beyond the issue of sports. While I fully support fairness in sports, there are far better ways of approaching the issue than what is proposed in these bills. According to a Portland Press Herald article on 20 April, dozens of transgender students have participated in high school sports since 2013. Before the recent anti-transgender backlash and panic, we had been making measured, reasonable progress in both ensuring fairness in female sports as well as providing opportunities for transgender girls and women to participate as the gender with which they identify. Let's return to that sort of cooperative discussion. At the elementary school level, there is no need to separate the sexes in the first place, as pre-puberty there are no biological advantages for boys. I think that the only reason we even have separate sports at this age is so that young boys are not subjected to the social stigma of being "beaten by a girl." In middle school and high school, we should not discriminate against transgender teens who are taking puberty blockers, nor should we discriminate against transgender athletes whom at later ages are undergoing hormone therapy to adjust their bodies to their gender identity. These women and girls do not have an advantage and should not be excluded from sports participation, but that is exactly what these bills would do.

It is perfectly possible to ensure safe and fair sports for everyone without infringing upon the rights of transgender women and girls. Let's let everyone enjoy the benefits of participation in sports activities with their peers.

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