

# Maine Chapter

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American Academy of Pediatrics

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

My name is Alyssa Goodwin, M.D., and I am a resident of Brunswick. I am here today to testify **in opposition** to **LD 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, **LD 868**: An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools, **LD 1002**: An Act to Protect Children's Identification by Requiring Public Schools to Use the Name and Gender Specified on a Child's Birth Certificate, **LD 1134**: An Act to Prohibit Males from Participating in Female Sports or Using Female Facilities, and **LD 1704**: An Act to Prohibit a School Administrative Unit from Adopting a Policy That Allows a Student to Use a Restroom Designated for Use by the Opposite Sex.

All children are created equal and deserve care, respect, and the opportunity to thrive. Schools play a critical role in the social and emotional development of youth, and **all students deserve to feel safe at school**.

These proposed bills would embolden sports spectators, members of the public, and other students to **harass and scrutinize girls who do not conform to stereotypical notions of femininity**. If passed, these laws would become **yet another weapon for bullies**—hurting all girls in Maine.

We should be fostering **connection and belonging in schools**, not exclusion. Students who feel connected at school are less likely to face health risks related to sexual behavior, substance use, violence, and poor mental health later in life.

**Gender-diverse youth are already a vulnerable population**, facing disproportionate rates of bullying, depression, self-harm, and suicide. According to the **2023 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS)**:

- **51.6% of transgender high school students** in Maine reported seriously considering suicide in the past year—compared to **15.5% of cisgender peers**.
- **28.4% of transgender students** reported attempting suicide at least once in the past year—compared to **6.6% of cisgender students**.

**It is not gender diversity itself that causes these alarming rates—but rather the stigma, harassment, and abuse these youth endure.**

Team sports benefit all children. K–12 school athletics foster **connection, confidence, teamwork, and healthy activity**. These proposed policies would put both transgender and cisgender girls at risk of **invasive and inappropriate gender verification procedures**. Policing who “counts” as a girl through any form of sex testing is not only deeply inappropriate—it is a **disturbing violation of privacy** that exposes all girls to the risk of sexual abuse.

Similarly, **restrictive restroom and locker room policies** increase the risk of harm to transgender youth. Research shows that in schools with such restrictions, **transgender students experience higher rates of sexual assault**. This is especially true for transgender girls, whose risk of being assaulted **increased by 149%** when attending schools with restrictive bathroom policies.

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School administrators across Maine have successfully supported transgender students and protected the **privacy and safety of all students**. We should focus on **providing these schools with support and resources**, not blanket policies that **harm our most vulnerable youth**.

I submit this testimony as a **pediatrician in Maine for over 20 years**, a **school physician**, an **expert in youth suicide prevention**, and as the **Chair of the School Health Committee** of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I speak on behalf of the many patients I have cared for over the past two decades—**all of whom deserve the same opportunities, dignity, and respect as every child in Maine**.

Thank you for your time and your continued commitment to the health and safety of Maine's children.

Alyssa Goodwin, M.D.

[https://www.maine.gov/miyhs/sites/default/files/2023\\_Reports/Detailed\\_Reports/HS/MIYHS2023\\_Detailed\\_Reports\\_HS\\_State/Maine%20High%20School%20Detailed%20Tables.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/miyhs/sites/default/files/2023_Reports/Detailed_Reports/HS/MIYHS2023_Detailed_Reports_HS_State/Maine%20High%20School%20Detailed%20Tables.pdf)

[https://www.maine.gov/miyhs/sites/default/files/2023\\_Reports/Detailed\\_Reports/HS/MIYHS2023\\_Detailed\\_Reports\\_HS\\_State/Maine%20High%20School%20Detailed%20Tables.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/miyhs/sites/default/files/2023_Reports/Detailed_Reports/HS/MIYHS2023_Detailed_Reports_HS_State/Maine%20High%20School%20Detailed%20Tables.pdf)

<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/143/6/e20182902/76816/School-Restroom-and-Locker-Room-Restrictions-and>