

Sarah Katz  
Portland, ME  
LD 233

My name is Sarah Katz, I am a resident of Portland, Maine, and I am writing in opposition of the bills before the committee. As a youth worker, social worker, public library worker and someone who cares deeply about young people, I believe steadfastly that every student should be able to be themselves, be safe, and feel respected at school. These bills would do just the opposite: they will hurt Maine schools, Maine youth, and Maine communities. These bans would allow and empower schools to engage in harmful policing adherence to gender norms, which unfairly scrutinizes girls' and non-binary people's bodies, and which have been shown to disproportionately impact girls of color. By inviting invasive/traumatizing "gender checks" on any girl who wants to play sports, these bans authorize a gross violation of privacy that makes these students more vulnerable to abuse. These bans would embolden spectators, community members, and fellow competitors to bully and harass young people. These bans would sow fear, distrust, and confusion for youth, families, and educators, and put a target on the backs of a small group of vulnerable students who already receive a great deal of hostility. Schools - like any space invested in youth safety & well-being - should create a supportive environment where ALL young people can receive an education and participate in school activities. Young people of all backgrounds deserve access to the proven social, mental, and physical benefits of these activities, and deserve to do what they love. And school climates are improved when \*more\* youth participate in extracurricular activities. Furthermore, bills that discriminate against transgender students also violate both state and federal constitutional guarantees of equal protection. LD 233, LD 868, and LD 1134 are discriminatory on the basis of sex and therefore are not constitutional. For all of these reasons, because young people matter and because trans rights are human rights, I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills. Thank you.