

Amelia Keleher
Portland
LD 233

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Portland, Maine
May 7, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee.

My name is Amelia Keleher and I reside at 22 Orange St. in Portland, ME. I am writing to urge you to OPPOSE 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. This bill would ban any school that receives state funding from allowing transgender girls to participate in school sports.

As the rights of more and more people living in the United States come under attack, why look to ban a small fraction of the population from participating in activities that bring joy to these individuals, their classmates, and our communities at large? The research shows that trans people make up only a fraction of all athletes, and causes no harm to the teams they play on. Yet for trans individuals, being able to play on teams that validate their gender identity has lifelong impacts.

When I was a young girl, there weren't any girls soccer teams in the town my family lived in, so I ended up playing soccer on a boys team. It was incredibly difficult at times to be the only girl on an all boys team. Research shows that states that allow transgender participation in sports see more girls participating in sports than states with bans. Sports can teach us so much about life – they are literal spaces of growth, development, perseverance, practice. But not if they are built on exclusionary and discriminatory practices.

There are countless barriers that women and young girls face in sports, none of which are related to transgender inclusion. Rather than focusing on excluding trans people from sports, I urge you to develop and implement legislation that supports women's and trans peoples' athletic success — including through improving facilities, increasing pay, removing abusive coaches; and addressing racist, sexist, and homophobic harassment.

It is human to want to belong and feel comfortable in our bodies. We all deserve to be our best selves, and you can help protect this basic right. I urge you to vote “Ought not to Pass” on this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee.

Sincerely,
Amelia Keleher