

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Jake Kulaw, I'm a resident of South Portland and a member of the First Parish Unitarian Universalist parish in Portland. I am here today in opposition of the bills before the committee today (LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, LD 1337 and LD 1432).

All of these bills before you are a direct attack on transgender people based on misinformation. As a teacher I know these bills will hurt Maine schools and communities. Schools should create a supportive environment where all students thrive. Participating in sports teaches important values like perseverance, dedication, self assurance and teamwork. Bills that discriminate against transgender students 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. Athletic success isn't determined solely by gender. Like other athletes, trans athletes vary in ability, drive and conditioning. Being a trans athlete is no guarantee of great success or failure. Some people are using trans athletes as a weapon to further an agenda to roll back civil rights of LGBTQ people, people of color, women, immigrants, and many others.

The Maine Human Rights Act adopted protections for gender identity in 2005.

Any attempt to strip Maine's federal funding for protecting trans people is a federal overreach because it is inaccurate about the law and Maine acted in accord with law at all times. Passing this would reward the federal government's bullying tactics and open the door for further attacks on Mainers' civil rights, but it won't make Maine more safe or fair for anyone.

On a personal note as a transgender person, these laws impact my community and me making us feel less safe and even worse like we have a target on our back. No one should have to live with this fear. Changes to Maine law are unnecessary, and help no one.

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

Sincerely,

Jake Kulaw