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LD 868

Chairperson, members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of LD 868 – An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms, and Housing at Elementary, Secondary, and Postsecondary Schools.

I believe that all students deserve a safe and fair learning environment—one where dignity, privacy, and fairness are upheld for everyone.

LD 868 addresses a growing concern among students, parents, and educators: how to fairly balance individual identity with the right to privacy, safety, and equal opportunity in sensitive school settings such as restrooms, locker rooms, sports teams, and housing. This bill seeks to establish clear guidelines that preserve fairness in athletics, protect students' bodily privacy, and promote reasonable accommodations for all students.

In athletics, fairness must be a guiding principle. Biological differences between males and females can create significant disparities in strength, speed, and endurance, especially in competitive sports. LD 868 acknowledges these realities by ensuring that girls and women are not unfairly disadvantaged, while also allowing for inclusive participation in a manner that maintains the integrity of competition.

Similarly, when it comes to restrooms, locker rooms, and housing, the bill protects students' privacy without singling out or targeting any group. Instead, it creates clear boundaries while ensuring that reasonable accommodations are made for students who may not feel comfortable with the standard arrangements. This balance of clarity and compassion is essential for fostering trust and safety in our school communities.

I understand that this is a sensitive and complex issue. No student should ever feel unsafe or ostracized. But in our effort to be inclusive, we must also ensure that we are not compromising the rights and well-being of others. LD 868 provides a thoughtful framework that can serve the needs of all students—by ensuring clear standards, respecting individual dignity, and protecting opportunities for girls and women.

I urge the committee to pass LD 868 to help schools navigate these challenges with fairness, transparency, and empathy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.