

My name is Tom Letourneau. I am lifelong Maine, born and raised in Dayton, Maine. I graduated from Thornton Academy, Colby College and the University of Maine School of Law. I taught kindergarten for 8 years, including in MSAD 61 at Stevens Brook Elementary School in Bridgton. I now live in Portland, where I am a Trusts and Estates attorney at a Maine-based firm. Most importantly, however, I volunteer with the Yarmouth High School Cross Country, Indoor Track and Outdoor Track teams, which brings immense amount of fulfillment to my life.

In an executive order banning transgender individuals from serving their country, President Trump said that “adoption of a gender identity inconsistent with an individual’s sex conflicts with a soldier’s commitment to an honorable, truthful and disciplined lifestyle.” This attitude is absolute horseshit.

Notwithstanding the fact that he was referring to individuals willing to put their lives on the line to protect their country, being openly transgender is possibly the bravest and most honorable thing a person can do. As you well know, dear legislator, you get a lot of hate for being yourself when your trans. It’s an antiquated attitude used to vilify perceived sexual and gender “deviance.” Well, the world is big and complex, and efforts to force people into boxes don’t eradicate their existence.

The kids who want to compete in the gender of their choosing just want to be a part of a team, a community. I was an openly gay high school student during the George W. Bush era, and the fact that my coaches and teammates accepted me for who I was probably saved my life.

Furthermore, anti-trans advocates would like to have you think that winning the Class B Maine state pole vault championship closes the door for girls across the state. But, I hate to break it to everyone, college recruiters know who they’re looking for, gender-wise, not to mention the fact that compared to results even across New England, it’s certainly not a Class B indoor track champion. Which is to say, competing is not all about being on the podium. Thousands of kids in Maine will not even score at meets this year. But they should feel supported and validated by choosing to take part in a social, team-oriented activity rather than spending time on social media, consuming hate and filling themselves with self-doubt.

In conclusion, this bill targets a small minority of students that have the most to gain from participating in sports. Make the right choice. Republicans could have won the state house, Maine’s maps are very fair, and the fact is, they didn’t.