

Chelsea Marshall
Camden
LD 233

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

Thank you for the opportunity to write to the Committee. My name is Chelsea Marshall and I am a resident of Camden, the Co-Head Coach of Rock Coast Roller Derby and an athlete with Aroostook County Roller Derby. I stand strongly in opposition of the bills presented today: LD233, LD868, LD1002, LD1134, LD1704, LD1337, LD1432, and LD380.

As a coach and an athlete, I unequivocally support trans people and trans rights. Sports provide athletes of all ages an opportunity to stay active, build community, find belonging, and find their voice. Trans athletes are equally deserving of these opportunities.

From Equality Maine: "The issues of sports participation are already being handled appropriately by the correct organizations and governing associations to ensure fairness. Changes to Maine law [around this issue] are unnecessary and help no one." I have played roller derby for 17 seasons. My opportunities as a cis woman have never been impacted by the inclusiveness of my sport and the inclusion of trans athletes. Over the years I have had the distinct privilege to call trans and gender expansive athletes my teammates, my competitors, and above all, my friends. Without a doubt, our sport is enriched by including the wisdom, resilience, and voices of gender expansive athletes.

The teams I play for are small teams and we are directly impacted by the political climate and anti-trans rhetoric. Being a border state, we often play teams of equivalent skill and size from Canada. Many Canadian teams have made the difficult decision to not play games in the United States to protect the safety and wellbeing of their gender expansive athletes. I stand in solidarity with my Canadian friends and teammates in their decision to put their athletes' health and safety first. This also means that my American teammates and I are facing higher travel costs this season and in future seasons to have opportunities to play within our multi-National region.

I've been involved in athletics my whole life. As a young person, school-based athletics and the sports field was a reprieve from the challenges I was facing at the time. My coaches and mentors were a positive influence during an incredibly rough time. I shudder to think where I would have ended up had those opportunities been denied. According to The Trevor Project "When asked about new policies that would ban transgender girls from playing on girls' sports teams and transgender boys from playing on boys' sports teams, 64% of transgender and nonbinary youth said it made them feel angry, 44% felt sad, 39% felt stressed, and 1 in 4 felt scared. This is not how we support our youth. Trans athletes deserve a place on the field, the court or the track; an inclusive place to be supported, to stay active, to find community and to enjoy sport.

As an adult I found community, camaraderie, power, strength, and my voice in roller derby. It gave me the confidence and skills to be the leader I am both on the track and in the professional world. Many of us find roller derby in transitional periods in our lives. It is the community safety net that lifts us up and tells us "yes, you can do hard things". Trans athletes belong here. You can skate with us.

I strongly oppose LD233 and encourage members of this committee to stop this attack on our trans youth.