

Jenny Martinez Nocito
Mount Vernon
LD 1704

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Jenny Martinez Nocito, I'm a resident of Mount Vernon, Maine, and I'm writing in opposition of the bills before the committee today that impact our public schools, specifically: LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134 and LD 1704.

Nobody, and especially not a child or teenager, "decides" to identify as a different gender because it is easier, or to win at a sporting event. The very concept is absurdity itself. If you are in doubt, I urge you to remember your own teenage years: would you have had the courage to face condemnation from peers, family, friends, politicians, social media, even national news coverage? Would you have done this even when told it was your fault the school lunch program was threatened in your state? And would you have endured all of that, as a child, simply to compete in a sporting event where you had a better chance of placing well?

No human takes a difficult and sometimes life-shattering path unless they feel like it is their only option to live as themselves. Why do others feel the need to police that? So their child can - maybe - "win" a high school sports competition? I am a parent of two children who have competed against trans athletes in Maine and neither has felt anything but proud to be on that field.

I urge you to keep every Maine schoolchild safe and equally cared for:

Make sure that no state funding stops for a school because they are inclusive of trans rights; putting that responsibility on the shoulders of a single student is simply cruel.

Prevent the banning of any trans student from participating in school sports. The discrimination inherent in this proposal is appalling.

Allow and even encourage schools to respect every student by using their preferred name and pronouns in every instance that the student requests. Family permission is neither needed nor is it always safe.

Allow every student to use the bathroom, locker room, and other space that aligns with their gender identity, or where they feel most comfortable. There is no reason why that should impact any other student present. These students are not predators; they are children. They are simply attempting to live in a way that is most true to themselves, as are we all.

The gender a person identifies with is not what makes them a good person or not; that is defined by how they treat others, whether it be a friendly fistbump after a hard race, or by passing legislation that supports versus harms. We are at a critical point, and the decisions that our lawmakers make now are tremendously impactful. Where you go down in the history books will matter. I urge you to choose kindness over cruelty, and continue moving Maine forward to make all our lives better.

Respectfully, I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on LD 1704. Thank you.