

Matthew McCourt
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LD 233

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Matt McCourt. I'm a resident of Farmington, and I am a former youth ski coach and parent of two cisgender athletes who have had solid high school careers in cross-country and track, and competed at a higher level in Nordic skiing, both winning multiple team and individual state championships and competing in New England and national championships. During that time, my kids competed against a very small handful of trans athletes.

Our family has always been interested in widening participation in sports by encouraging all kinds of people to compete at whatever level they are capable. We accept that trans girls are girls who have as much right as my daughter to compete in high school girls' sports. The movement that has prompted these bills is teaching athletes, especially girls, that they should be aggrieved and seek to exclude other girls from their sports, under the misguided idea that that will make them better athletes.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose the bills before the committee today.

It's been disgraceful to see the deceptive and hateful ways that a national anti-trans astroturf group tried to recruit my daughter, or the campaign of anti-trans activists who showed up to our sports events to hurl nasty comments at a 15-year-old girl so clearly doing what she loved to do. This is not who Mainers should be.

MPA sports already struggle with declining participation, especially among girls. If passed, these bills would send a message to all kids that the state is more interested in policing bodies than supporting athletes. The actual number of trans athletes is extremely small, but the harm these bills would cause is enormous—discouraging participation, creating divisions, and inviting bullying and harassment for any girl who doesn't fit someone else's idea of what an athlete "should" look like. Other states that have passed this slate of legislation have struggled with harmful whisper campaigns and accusations targeting young girls who may not conform to gender norms.

I urge you to reject these bills and instead focus on making Maine's schools and sports more welcoming for all. Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills. Thank you.