

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY PAYTON MCNABB

Maine Joint Committee on Judiciary LD 868, An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools

May 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Payton McNabb. I am an Ambassador at Independent Women and a former Volleyball athlete. I urge you to pass LD 868 to protect female athletes from being permanently injured at the hands of a male player.

On Sept 1st, 2022, I was struck in the head by a spiked ball during my high school volleyball game by a male on the opposing team. As a result of the sheer impact of the ball, I received a concussion and neck injury.

I love sports—the camaraderie, discipline, the team bonding, and the confidence for the future. I was a 3 sport athlete in high school—participating in softball, basketball, and volleyball.

I was always very aware of the possibility of injury during competitive play, but my experience on the court that day was different. The hit was so violent that I was knocked unconscious, lying in a fencing position for over 30 seconds. Years later, my body and mind are still recovering from the hit. I still suffer from partial paralysis on my right side, vision problems, cognitive issues, constant headaches, and more.

This incident was 100% avoidable if my rights as a female athlete had not been excluded on the basis of being inclusive to allow a male to compete with women. I nor my teammates ever agreed to play against a male athlete. We were forced to by our state athletic association.

If the adults in the room don't start standing up and putting an end to this senseless threat to females, there won't be women's sports. Women have a

right to a fair and equal opportunity on and off the playing field. Men have no place in our single-sex spaces.

I love being an athlete, as do the other girls I play with. I write to you today to represent not just myself but to ensure all female athletes—my little sister, my cousins, my teammates—have access to fair competition.

Women deserve to compete on a level playing field without fear of injury. I may be one of the first to come before you with an injury, but I can assure you I will not be the last if we don't protect female athletes. This is why it is crucial that you pass LD 868 to prevent other women from suffering from injuries such as my own. LD 868 goes even further by defining sex-based terms and protecting other single-sex spaces.

For these reasons, I urge you to stand with the nearly 700,000 women and girls in Maine and support LD 868 today.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Payton McNabb
Ambassador
Independent Women