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Stratton
LD 233

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Good afternoon Chairs Senator Carne and Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Kelly Merrill and I serve as the Co-Chair of the Maine Green Independent Party. I am a resident of Stratton. Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today in opposition to LD 233, "An Act to Prohibit Biological Males from Participating in School Athletic Programs and Activities Designated for Females When State Funding Is Provided to the School,"

LD 233 is a bad bill. This bill, and those like it, wrap hatred and ignorance in policy, and promote that hatred under the guise of protecting women and girls. It is discriminatory, unconstitutional, and harmful.

Trans rights are human rights. Trans women are women and trans girls are girls. This issue had been investigated, debated, and decided by both National Collegiate Athletic Association and the International Olympic Committee. Their conclusion? Let trans girls and women play.

In addition to denying transgender athletes access to the numerous health, educational, and social benefits inherent in school sports, discriminatory policies such as these serve to legitimize and foster hostile climates, including bullying and harassment, and painful feelings of exclusion and not belonging. They are cruel and unnecessary and further, open girls up to predation. Who is going to be violating their privacy to do gender checks? One of the folks who sponsored these bills? Not on my child you're not.

A couple notes: We do not comply in advance to the will of an administration that would so egregiously attempt to exceed the limitations put upon it by law. We do not change the state law to make it okay for our children's education and our children's futures to be held hostage. We are what stands between a federal government whose executive orders attempt to exceed its authority, and the people of Maine. We in this room and elected to this body are what stand in the way of the actualization of deeply discriminatory and dangerous laws that target the most marginalized among us.

To those who put these anti-trans bills forth, I'll note that some of you co-sponsored 4 and 5 of them. I find it outrageous that you spend your time this way when our country is falling apart.

I am a non-binary person. I exist in the world, and I will not be erased. We will not allow our trans and non-binary brothers, sisters, and siblings to be attacked.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and deep respect to those directly impacted people who courageously stand up today. Again, the Maine Green Independent Party urges you to vote ONTP on LD 233, as well as all other anti-trans bills, and as related to this testimony, those sports-related bills including LD 868 and LD 1134.