

Jennifer Plaut  
Trescott Twp  
LD 233

Testimony in opposition of LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, LD 1337, LD 1432, and LD 380.

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

My name is Jennifer Plaut and I live in eastern Washington County. I write to you today as a Mainer, a mother, a cis-gendered woman, an athlete, a coach, and a Quaker. Some of those labels I was lucky enough to be born into (Mainer!) while some I have worked to earn (mother, athlete). Some things about ourselves we get to choose, and others we do not. But we all deserve the bodily autonomy and independence to say who we are in this world. The bills before the committee today would strip my transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming family members, dear friends, and fellow Mainers of their rights to determine for themselves who they are. I find the bills hateful and degrading.

With specific regard to athletics: physical activity is good for everyone. The science is very clear that being active is good for our mental and physical health, and especially important for our young people who have the often negative impacts of endless screen time and social media. I coach a middle school cross country team and also teach a variety of activities to school-age kids: kayaking, biking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. I get to witness the kids building skills, strength, and confidence year-over-year. Transgender boys and girls, nonbinary kiddos, gender non-conforming youth: they all deserve those positive effects too! Everyone needs to be active and as adults, I think it sets a terrible example when we place the ability of a cis-gendered girl to win over the rights of every girl to participate, get in shape, and experience her body as powerful and competent. I have never won a race in my life but I have been a runner since middle school and I am healthier and happier because of it. All Mainers deserve that choice and taking it away from trans kids is treating them like second-class humans and citizens. As a society, I think we need to prioritize everyone's health and wellbeing over the importance of winning in competitions. I stand with my trans neighbors, friends and family members to say: stop trying to legislate trans people out of existence! Maine is full of trans folks and we are lucky to have their energy, creativity, and skills. Let's treat them like the full citizens they are and work together to solve the real problems facing our state and our world.

I appreciate the work of the Judiciary Committee and I hope that all of the bills before you today are voted down and abandoned.