

Sam Richardson
Portland
LD 1134

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Sam Richardson and I'm a resident of Portland. I am writing today in opposition of bills LD 233, 868, 1134, and 1704.

All children deserve a happy and supportive environment to grow in, and this includes the ability to participate in sports with their peers. When trans, nonbinary, and gender diverse children are denied these opportunities and access to spaces that they feel comfortable in they face profound consequences to their social, mental, and physical wellbeing.

Trans children are already under enormous pressure in society and as a result experience much higher rates of depression, self harm, and suicidal ideation than their peers. According to a peer reviewed study published last year in Nature Human Behavior, states that passed anti-transgender laws saw suicide attempts by trans and gender nonconforming teenagers rise by up to 72%. Speaking as a trans Mainer myself, these numbers are not at all surprising. If these bills pass, we can expect real children to suffer concrete harm.

Transgender people are not predators or opportunists looking to cheat at sports. We are simply people who want to live our lives peacefully and authentically with the same rights as everyone else.

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!