

**RE: LD 1134- An Act to Prohibit Males from Participating in Female Sports or Using Female Facilities**

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Julie Schirmer LCSW, ACSW. I am the President of the Board of the National Association of Social Workers, Maine Chapter (NASW Maine) and a resident of Falmouth. I am writing to express NASW Maine's strong opposition to LD 1134, An Act to Prohibit Males from Participating in Female Sports or Using Female Facilities. The passage of this bill would harm the mental health of transgender girls by removing their access to supportive, affirming school environments, including participation in sports, which research shows is a critical protective factor for youth well-being.

Participation in school athletics has been shown to improve academic performance, boost self-esteem, and enhance confidence. It also plays a significant role in reducing stress, anxiety, depression, and the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors. These benefits are especially critical for transgender girls, who already experience higher rates of mental health challenges, not because of who they are, but because of the chronic stress caused by discrimination, stigma, and exclusion.

Banning transgender girls from sports will only exacerbate these challenges. According to the National Institutes of Health, transgender athletes already face barriers including fear of rejection, anxiety in gendered spaces, and heightened dysphoria. And yet, sports participation has been shown to improve mental health outcomes for trans youth. Given the elevated suicide risk in this population, creating inclusive environments is not just beneficial, it's lifesaving. This bill moves in the opposite direction, further isolating an already marginalized group of students.

This bill doesn't just target transgender girls, it puts all girls at risk. It empowers schools to police students' adherence to narrow and outdated gender norms, leading to unfair scrutiny of girls' bodies, especially those of girls of color, who are disproportionately impacted. These bans create a climate of fear, confusion, and mistrust for students, families, and educators alike. This kind of scrutiny doesn't protect girls, it harms them. It reinforces rigid, harmful gender expectations that hurt all young people.

LD 1134 is an issue of fairness AND an issue of constitutional rights. Bills that discriminate against transgender girls, such as LD 1134, violate both state and federal guarantees of equal protection. Maine has long upheld protections for gender identity, including through the Maine Human Rights Act and Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs and activities. This bill would not only exclude transgender girls from participating in school sports, but it also risks undermining Maine's commitment to equal protection and civil rights.

And let's be clear – this bill refers to the two transgender athletes in Maine public schools (BBC, 2025 and Newsweek 2023).

**NASW Maine urges you to oppose LD 1134.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Julie Schirmer LCSW, ACSW  
President of the Board at NASW Maine

**References:**

Faguy, A. (2025) US government sues Maine over refusing to ban transgender athletes. BBC News, Washington, DC. April 16, 2025. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy48r02zrpvo>

Skinner, A. (2023) How many transgender athletes play in women's sports? Newsweek. April 21, 2023. <https://www.newsweek.com/how-many-transgender-athletes-play-womens-sports-1796006>