

Nichole Sparlin

Lewiston, ME

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

Thank you for accepting my written testimony. My name is Nichole Sparlin and I am a resident of Lewiston, ME. I am writing in opposition to the following bills before the committee: LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, LD 1337, LD 1432, and LD 380.

Our laws should not discriminate against anyone because of their sex or gender, and these bills clearly target people based on their gender identity, which is currently protected under the Maine Human Rights Act.

Weaponizing state funding against schools to stop them from allowing transgender athletes to compete is both wrong and discriminatory, as is banning transgender athletes from participating in the sport of their choice. Requiring schools to use only the name and gender specified on a child's birth certificate is overreaching and unnecessary. (Would it be allowable to refer to a child by their nickname under this requirement? It seems silly and over-reactive to police the speech of teachers and students in this manner.) Finally, removing consideration of gender identity from the Maine Human Rights act is cruel and would leave many without the legal protections they are due in employment, housing, and other areas.

Sex and gender are more complex than XX and XY chromosomes, though many would like them to be otherwise. As we continue to learn more about the complexity and diversity of human biology and experience, we would do well to keep epistemic humility in mind and always err on the side of protecting people's rights rather than taking them away. Not understanding the lived experiences of others is never an excuse for perpetuating bigotry through our laws.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills.