

Kristen Stacy
Denmark
LD 233

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Testimony against LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134, LD 1704, and LD 1337
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My name is Kristen Stacy. I am testifying in support of all transgender student athletes across the State of Maine. I am a born-and-raised Mainer currently living in Denmark Maine and the mother of a two year old daughter. I have worked with high school aged students with Jobs for Maine's Graduates as well as Goodwill Workforce Solutions; teaching employability skills. I am the co-founder and current President for a Maine non-profit supporting sexual assault survivors with PTSD, a former collegiate athlete, and a current girls varsity basketball coach at Fryeburg Academy. My message today is for the promotion of equality and perspective.

Do you know why we compete in sports at the high school level? Truly at its core? It has very little to do with winning. It centers around real life experiences; the opportunity to make mistakes with less severe consequences, learn how to be a good teammate, develop resilience, and be a part of something bigger than yourself. It is often the first life experience that can prepare our students for the real world. It's an experience students can put on their resumes when applying for their first jobs. It's an opportunity to advocate for themselves and learn how to regulate emotions. If we take this opportunity to completely dehumanize the transgender community, and as adults, place fear into our young girls around the most underrepresented minority in female sports in our state, what message have you sent to our girls? That if you don't understand someone's lifestyle you should fear them? That they should meet adversity with complete lack of understanding? That equality only exists if it's in favor of the people that make up the majority? We as women are underrepresented and fighting for equality in so many facets of life, and yet, why can't we bring ourselves to empathize with this community? Secondly I do not hear about biological male coaches, as men in girls locker rooms, being questioned about their jobs. Are the current adult biological men coaches being monitored for possibly overstepping boundaries in their relationships with high school girls? Are we asking girls about how comfortable they are with male coaches in female sports? If the fear around girls' safety in sports lies in male participation then that should include all men in all positions that currently participate in girls sports.

The chances of a Maine female high school athlete competing at the DII or DI level is less than 1%. If our concerns are about the opportunity for our female athletes to compete at the next level we should be looking at what resources we lack in comparison to high schools competing at a much more advanced level at a younger age in the south and the west coast and how we can advance. We should be looking into why female athletic events in our high schools have a significantly lower support rate at games in our communities. Recruitment processes for our female athletes with higher level colleges are not happening and how to get those schools at our games. None of these things have anything to do with the transgender community.

Lastly we must recognize the courage required for a person to identify publicly as trans. The judgmental high schooler is one that we have all encountered. Reflect on your own high school experience and the difficulty you had at one point or another around bullying or feeling like an outsider. Can you imagine the amount of FEAR you would have, and the bravery you would need, to come out to all those judgy teenagers and change your entire life? Knowing that you would be mocked for it, harassed for it, even hated for it? Knowing that the majority of the people in the WORLD would not understand?

Okay, now imagine doing all of that in order to win a high school trophy. Do you know any straight men or boys in your own life who would have pretended to

be a girl just to win a track meet? Make the basketball team? Even win a state championship? You think they would have gone to years of therapy, undergone hormone treatment, upended their social and family life and permanently altered their own bodies just so they could put a plaque or a trophy on their wall? I doubt it.

I appreciate your attention to this letter and hope that this testimony elicits a spark of empathy and perspective. I believe that a majority of Mainers have a hard time with people and situations they do not understand, but that we are also some of the most compassionate people in this country when it comes to helping our friends and neighbors. Our trans girls need us. We must stand by them, be good role models for our daughters, and reject fear and bullying. In that spirit, I ask that this committee reject the proposed bills seeking to ban trans athletes from competing in girls' sports. Thank you for your attention.

Kristen Stacy