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LD 1704

I am writing as both a person of faith (indeed, as an active church member most of my life) and as an education professional. I strongly urge the Committee to vote OUGHT NOT TO PASS on LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134 and LD 1704.

The issues of sports participation are already being handled appropriately by the correct organizations and governing associations to ensure fairness. Coaches and schools in Maine are already charged with keeping ALL students –and that of course includes ALL those playing in their sports programs, safe.

Not too long ago, a Maine high school student I had been counseling (regarding post-secondary school planning) told me how she regarded a recent controversy about a cross country competitor from a different school. “She just wants to run, just like I do,” this student said. “She just wants to enjoy competing, just like I do. Why would I want to deprive a fellow student from enjoying something I enjoy doing myself on the basis of her gender identity?” This same student also shared how she and her teammates met together and committed to supporting ALL athletes they compete with or against at meets.

I find a lot of equity and safety evident in this anecdote. Indeed, it is inspiring to know how our state’s youth can engage in thoughtful discussions about issues thrust on them by outside forces. There is no need for these bills to legislate a narrow definition of terms such as equity and safety that upends the current ability of local schools, teachers, coaches and teammates to promote safety and equity for ALL students.

As a person of faith, what is clear from LD 233, LD 868, LD 1002, LD 1134 and LD 1704 is their overreach that dehumanizes, that ostracizes, that stokes fear, ignorance and harm in order to score political power points. As a Christian, what an anathema to the teachings of Jesus.

Thank you for this opportunity to urge you to vote OUGHT NOT TO PASS on each of these bills.