

Finn Teach
Portland, Maine
May 2, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Finn Teach, and I live in Portland. **I am writing in opposition to LD 868: *An Act to Ensure Equity and Safety in Athletics, Restrooms, Changing Rooms and Housing at Elementary, Secondary and Postsecondary Schools*.**

As a transgender person, I know what it feels like to be excluded, to have your identity questioned, and to constantly navigate systems that weren't built with you in mind. LD 868 would turn that private pain into public policy. It would ban transgender girls from school sports, and it goes even further—prohibiting trans and nonbinary students from using the restrooms and locker rooms that align with their gender identity. These are not small details. These are daily realities that affect a student's safety, dignity, and ability to learn.

This bill doesn't promote safety. It creates fear and chaos in schools by forcing administrators, teachers, and even students into the role of gender police. It encourages suspicion, stigma, and invasive scrutiny of *all* students. As a parent and educator, I worry deeply about what this means for every girl in Maine. Under this bill, any student who looks “too tall,” “too strong,” or doesn't meet someone else's idea of what a girl should look like could be harassed or excluded. LD 868 would make schools less safe, not more.

We know from experience and from data that laws like these don't just harm transgender students—they open the door to broader discrimination. ACLU reports have shown that policing of gender norms disproportionately targets girls of color and students who are perceived as “different.” This bill will create an atmosphere of fear and confusion for students, families, and educators who are simply trying to make schools welcoming and functional places to learn.

Policies about sports, restrooms, and facilities already exist in Maine schools—and they are working. These issues are being managed thoughtfully and compassionately by school boards, administrators, and sports associations who are in the best position to balance fairness, safety, and inclusion. There is no need for sweeping state-level mandates that override local decision-making and impose a one-size-fits-all rule that helps no one.

This bill also raises serious legal concerns. Bans like this one have been ruled unconstitutional in other states because they violate the Equal Protection Clause. Maine's own Human Rights Act has protected gender identity since 2005. We cannot allow fear-based political agendas to dismantle those hard-won protections under the false promise of safety.

We have real work to do in supporting young people in Maine—supporting their mental health, addressing bullying, ensuring safe housing and access to education. LD 868 would distract from

that work while doing real harm to some of our most vulnerable students. I urge the committee to vote no on this harmful and unnecessary bill.

Thank you.

Finn Teach