

Amy Tingle
Northport
LD 1002

Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Amy Tingle, I'm a resident of Northport, and I am here also as an LGBTQ+ Mainer who is writing in opposition to the bills before the committee today.

I know there are so many issues we are all facing, but this one is deeply important to me because I believe that every single one of us deserves to live a life free from harassment, rejection, discrimination and violence.

The bans before your committee today would cause more harm than good because they would invite any person to call for an invasive or traumatizing "gender check" on any girl who wants to play sports if they think she is "too tall" or "too strong." They would embolden spectators, community members, and fellow competitors to bully and harass girls by accusing them of being trans. If these bills pass, they will become another weapon for bullies to use against girls in Maine.

And they blatantly violate the privacy of all Maine women and girls. These bans empower schools to engage in policing adherence to gender norms, which unfairly scrutinizes girls' bodies, and have been shown to affect girls of color even more. These bans will cause fear, distrust, and confusion for students, families, and educators.

Trans women in Maine already face serious barriers to accessing appropriate shelter—not to mention disproportionate risks of violence—when they are unhoused. Shelters know how to keep all women safe and have been doing it for years.

I know personally what it feels like to hide my identity, to try to live a life inside a box that was built for me, not by me. I know what it feels like to want to die rather than continue to live a life in hiding and fear. The attack on transgender rights is far more insidious than attempting to hurt one person, they are an attack on our democracy. Please stop this erosion of democracy. We are stronger together and we are stronger with fully alive, fully free, fully celebrated Mainers.

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

Thank you!"

Amy Tingle
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