

Grace Wright  
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LD 233

I strongly oppose bill LD 233 (in addition to the rest of the anti-trans bills listed here) because of the mental, psychological, and, ultimately, physical harm it will cause young trans students who should be allowed to live without fear as they explore how to express themselves. Adolescent and post-adolescent years are already amongst the most grueling socially, where schools become places of comparison and competition. As a cis-female athlete, I played three school sports from middle to high school, which narrowed down to two collegiate sports at Bates College. I struggled with my self-esteem, and discovered more confidence within myself when I was in an environment where I could comfortably express myself. At Bates, I competed on a team where the men's and women's teams shared a team room, practiced together, and went on the same training trips. Some of my strongest and closest friendships emerged from this team, which I believe in part is because there was less of a dichotomy between the men's and women's teams when it came to training and building team camaraderie. I can only imagine the mental and psychological turmoil that trans students must face as they must continue to inhabit a body and spaces that are not reflective or welcoming of their true selves. As I now live permanently in Maine, and have several friends who are trans and several others who have young children who will be raised in the Maine school system, I would want trans students to be able to compete in a sport where they feel most like themselves, are accepted, and feel safe. The state of Maine should continue to embrace allowing biological males to compete in school athletic programs designated for females to mitigate mental, psychological, and physical stress for trans students. Putting myself back into my middle and high school and college shoes, I would embrace having a teammate who is biologically male if it meant that they felt more accepted and comfortable expressing themselves. There would be no harm to me or others by having a trans teammate. I would have no issue competing against a trans student from another school, and, if anything, I think it would build a stronger and healthier student community in Maine. Passing this anti-trans bill (along with the others listed above) would lead to increased mental, psychological, and physical anguish for trans students who would be unable to compete in a sport where they feel accepted as themselves. I strongly believe that passing this set of anti-trans bills would greatly harm the student body in Maine, which is why I strongly oppose bill LD 233 and the remainder of the bills listed here.