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LD 2239

Dear judiciary committee,

I am writing as a Maine resident to urge you to support policies that protect transgender youth—specifically their right to participate in school sports consistent with their gender identity and to use facilities that align with who they are.

Maine has a long-standing commitment to civil rights. Gender identity is protected under the Maine Human Rights Act, and our courts have affirmed that transgender students must be treated equally in schools, including access to bathrooms and facilities that match their identity. (EqualityMaine) This is something our state has gotten right, and it is worth defending.

Recent legislative debates make clear that these protections are not guaranteed. In 2025, multiple bills sought to restrict transgender students' participation in sports and access to bathrooms and locker rooms. Most of these proposals were ultimately rejected, reflecting the will of many Mainers who believe in fairness and inclusion. (mainemorningstar.com) However, some proposals—like the narrowly advanced sports ban in the House—show that these rights remain under threat. (Maine Public)

At its core, this issue is about safety, dignity, and equal opportunity. Transgender youth already face disproportionately high levels of bullying, isolation, and mental health challenges. Inclusive policies are not abstract—they are essential protections that allow young people in Maine to feel safe and respected in their schools and communities.

Concerns about fairness in sports are often raised, but they are more complex than they are sometimes portrayed. Transgender athletes are a very small number of students—only a handful across the entire state—and policies should be guided by medical evidence and fairness frameworks developed by athletic organizations, not broad exclusions targeting vulnerable youth. (Maine State Legislature)

Similarly, concerns about bathroom safety are frequently cited but not supported by evidence. There is no credible data showing that inclusive policies increase risks to others. What is clear, however, is that transgender students are far more likely to experience harassment or harm when denied access to appropriate facilities.

For many of us, this is also a moral issue. Values like compassion, dignity, and care for the vulnerable are deeply rooted in Maine communities and in many faith traditions. Excluding transgender youth from everyday activities like sports or safe restroom access does not reflect those values. It risks isolating children who are already marginalized.

Maine has shown leadership before by rejecting most efforts to roll back protections for transgender people. I urge you to continue that leadership. Please oppose legislation that restricts the rights of transgender youth and support policies that ensure all students in Maine can participate fully and safely in school life.

Thank you for your time and your service to our state.

Sincerely,  
Lesley Andersen  
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