

## Testimony in Opposition to LD 2239

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is [Your Name], and I am from [Town]. I am writing in strong opposition to LD 2239, the citizen initiative that would roll back protections for transgender students in Maine schools. The draft ballot language makes clear that this proposal goes beyond sports. It would require schools to restrict bathrooms and other facilities based on the sex listed on a student's original birth certificate, and it would open the door to lawsuits against schools. This is not a small policy change. It is a direct attack on the dignity, safety, and rights of transgender students in Maine

I also want to object to the process. This hearing was announced on April 13 for 9:00 a.m. on April 14. Yes, written and Zoom testimony were technically available through the Legislature's system, but that does not change the fact that this was extremely short notice. Working people, parents, caregivers, disabled Mainers, and people coming from rural parts of the state deserve a real chance to participate, not a rushed process that makes it harder for ordinary people to be heard on an issue this serious.

Let's be honest about what is happening here. This is not about fairness. It is not about safety. And it is not about protecting girls. It is about using transgender children as political targets while outsiders pour money into Maine to divide our communities and stir up fear. Reporting on the campaign's finance filings said Illinois billionaire Richard Uihlein gave \$800,000 to the political committee behind this effort. Maine children should not be used as pawns in a national political strategy financed by out-of-state millionaire and billionaire money.

If this were truly about protecting girls, then we would be talking about the real issues girls face: making sure schools are fully funded, strengthening girls' sports programs, addressing harassment and violence, expanding mental health support, and making sure every student has the resources they need to succeed. But that is not what this proposal does. Instead, it singles out a small and vulnerable group of students and tells them they are unwelcome. It asks schools to police children's identities and bodies instead of educating them. That is not protection. That is cruelty dressed up as policy.

This referendum is meant to divide us. It tells Mainers to fear one another instead of standing together. It distracts from the real challenges facing our schools and communities. And it creates more hostility, more pain, and more legal conflict, all so political operatives can score points by targeting children.

Maine should reject this politics of fear. We should reject this attempt to write discrimination into our laws. And we should reject the idea that out-of-state money gets to define Maine values. Our state should stand for dignity, fairness, and safety for every student, not just the ones politicians find convenient to defend.

I urge you to reject LD 2239, and accept the referendum question as written by Secretary Bellows.

Thank you for your consideration.

Linda Deane  
Livermore  
LD 2239

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