

Senator Carney, Representative Khun, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for considering my testimony. I am writing today to express my strong opposition to LD 2239 - "An Act to Designate School Sports Participation and Facilities by Sex"

As a boy growing up in Maine, I was a huge Star Trek fan. The Original Series and first five movies were practically scripture to me, and were how I learned about the Vulcan concept of Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations, or IDIC. It's the fundamental belief that a society is made more vibrant and durable by celebrating and understanding the variety of life experiences of its members.

When I was in the 6th grade, I joined a local chapter of a Star Trek club in Sanford. I made new friends from all walks of life, many older than me, but we all had the same fundamental passion for Gene Roddenberry's vision of the future. About a year in, I noticed that one of our regular members who I'd become friends with had been missing our monthly meetings and wondered how she was doing. I was told that she'd been dealing with some personal issues, but that she was okay.

Several months later, we were having a potluck at one of our houses and nerding out about the latest episodes of Voyager, including my absent friend. Before they got there, one of the adults explained to me that they were going by a different name now, and asked to be treated as a man instead of a woman. I was by that time probably 13 or 14 and had never heard of a trans person before. Despite that, because I was surrounded by adults who were all understanding and accepting, I immediately understood that while this was unusual, there was also nothing wrong. I accepted my friend's life change without a second thought, and was glad to see him truly comfortable with himself in a way that I hadn't before.

I've looked back on that experience many times as an adult, and I've thought about how differently I could have responded to my friend's decision to come out publicly and express himself the way that he really felt. At that age, it would have been much easier to laugh and to ridicule than to learn and accept him for being different from me. I think about how incredibly brave he was to do so at the time, because as you may recall, the 1990s were a very tumultuous decade for the Maine LGBTQIA+ community. And I wish that he hadn't needed to be so brave, nor wait until well into his own adulthood to come out and live his truth.

Acts such as LD 2239 purport to "protect girls in sports," but in reality they are designed to tell trans youth and adults that they are not welcome to participate in our society as their natural selves. That if they want to fit in, they should live their lives as the state wants them to, not as they know themselves to be. That we neither want nor value their uniqueness and diverse points of view. I find that not only deeply offensive, but also to be a dangerous precedent for the "othering" of certain types of people. This is in direct violation of the Maine Human Rights Act, and I hope that the voters will see through this deception come November. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony, and for your continued service to our great state.

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