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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary.

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony. My name is Kate Easter. I'm a resident of Limestone, a small town in eastern Aroostook County. I come here as a concerned citizen. I am also a Commissioner with the Maine Permanent Commission on Women and Girls, a long-time education & workforce development professional, a member of the Roller Derby Officiating community, a soon-to-be ordained member of the Clergy, and a member of the Board of Pride Aroostook.

***I am opposed to the proposed ballot measure, LD 2239.***

We cannot open the door to laws and government policing or controlling our bodies. This proposal would repeal our foundational Maine Human Rights Act and leave Mainers with fewer civil rights protections.

I work with young adults. These are youth who have come to Maine to change the direction of their lives. They come here because we are open, accepting, caring, and a community who will take them as they are into our churches, our schools, our sports teams. I am proud of my colleagues and neighbors for opening their minds and hearts to transgender young people who are often kicked out of their homes and cut off from family due to their gender. Can you imagine being put out on the street like that? This bill is one step closer to the state being the one saying, "you're not welcome here."

I proudly serve Aroostook Roller Derby as a non-skating official. We have friends on competing teams in surrounding providences who are scared to come to Maine to play a game because they are transgender. While this bill is specific to schools in Maine, who's to say it's not just the beginning? Where does anti-transgender policy end? My beloved sport & the community of players welcomes transgender and gender expansive teammates – we know that we are team, we do not play individually; the success of our team is because we play as one. I am proud to be part of the roller derby community and fear that if this bill passes, if you let it pass, teams like ours are next. Where does it end?

Our energy and resources ***should*** be spent on addressing inequalities in sports, including lack of funding and unequal access to facilities. But this measure would make schools use their scarce resources on requirements like having staff check ALL students' birth certificates before they use the bathroom. What good does this do anyone? It further pushes students and their families into closets. It creates a culture of fear and distrust. It gives the bullies agency to do their worst because they've already seen the adults do it. Let's not model that behavior for our children.

The proposed ballot measure is an extreme, blanket ban that doesn't fit in Maine communities. The proposal's language is a vague, poorly defined, "one-size-fits all" approach that would be difficult and expensive for schools to implement, likely causing more chaos and distraction for students, their families, and the staff of the school.

This proposal was funded entirely by one out-of-state billionaire to influence the 2026 midterm elections. Mainers are too smart to give up our way of life to an out-of-stater.

Let's protect our children. Don't relegate them (or their trusted adults and care-givers) to the shadows. Let's stand up as the Mainers we are and not give our state over to wealthy out-of-staters who are out of touch with what Maine stands for: compassion, community, and the conviction that everyone belongs here. Let's take care of our neighbors.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee.