

Deirdre Gould  
Porter  
LD 2239

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing committee on Judiciary,

My name is Deirdre Gould, I live in Porter, Maine. I'm writing to you today in opposition to proposed ballot measure LD 2239. When I was in high school two of my friends were some of the first girls to participate in school wrestling matches. I went to as many of their matches as I could. I remember how hard it was for them even to win a spot on the team, having to fight for that access first with their teammates, then the administration and other parents. Then, once they won those spots, more times than not, no opponent would participate in a match against a girl and forfeit instead. I distinctly remember how immensely disappointing and frustrating it was for my friends, but they persisted. I remember how many girls in my school wanted to play baseball instead of softball and were told that "softball was good enough". And then, as we thought about what we would choose for our occupations, how many of my friends were told they could not be firefighters. They could be soldiers but would never fully participate. They could be politicians but no one would ever vote for them for higher office.

I am so glad that there are now girls wrestling all over the state. And women firefighting. And women soldiers. And senators, governors, representatives. Why on earth, after all that heartache and struggle, would any of us want to exclude someone else from the same opportunities we fought for? For the same reasons we were excluded? Because of what our birth certificates decided our limits should be? Girls should be everywhere. All girls, cisgender or transgender. I've heard supporters of this ballot initiative say that it is meant to "protect girls' spaces". Protect them from what? A kid who wants to play softball? How is that a threat? How were my friends a threat to boys in wrestling? They weren't. Separating us doesn't protect anyone at all. It just adds more struggle. An initiative like this will only cost schools more resources for a danger that doesn't exist and make it harder for kids to reach their potential, develop deep and comforting social networks, and aim higher.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my perspective.