

Lucy Knowlton
South Portland
LD 2239

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

My name is Lucy Knowlton, and I live in South Portland. As a runner, an athletics coach, and lifelong Mainer, I am opposed to the proposed ballot measure, LD 2239, for a number of reasons.

LD 2239 misleads and misinforms the public by its implication - explicit and implicit - that (cisgender) girls need protection from their trans peers. Trans athletes do not, and have never, posed a risk to girls' or women's sports. Trans athletes have been openly participating in sports for decades, with no pattern or history of causing any harm to their cis peers.

Claims that trans inclusion harms girls' sports are inaccurate and baseless. Research shows states that include transgender participation have more girls participating in sports than states with bans. Women and girls face significant barriers in sports that have nothing to do with transgender inclusion: inequitable facilities, pay, and marketing; abusive coaches; and racist, sexist, and homophobic harassment. The greatest threat to girls' and women's participation in sports (as well as in public life, politics, the workforce, etc) has historically and consistently been the misogyny and bias propagated by cisgender men, not a small fraction of our state and national population who simply want to play on the team that matches their gender identity.

I believe that bans, sex "testing", and genital or DNA screenings not only harm trans youth, but also cause harm to their cisgender peers. Trans participation in sports was adopted as a strategic culture war wedge issue by right-wing political figures and anti-equality groups, and LD 2239 has been funded by an out-of-state billionaire who does not have the best interests of the Pine Tree State in mind.

Our state laws must protect freedom and fairness: 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 hope you will join me in not supporting a discriminatory, damaging, and misleading piece of legislation that does not match the reality that our young athletes face.