

Valerie Moyer, PhD
South Berwick
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Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you in advance for reading this written testimony. My name is Valerie Moyer. I'm a resident of South Berwick, former Div. I NCAA athlete (track and cross country, University of Vermont, 2014) and have a PhD in Women and Gender Studies from Stony Brook University that specifically focused on sports policy surrounding transgender athletes. I have also been a part of research teams at Athlete Ally, a national advocacy group dedicated to LGBTQ+ inclusion in sports and have taught at University of Southern Maine (go huskies!). **I would like to voice my staunch opposition to the proposed ballot measure, LD 2239.**

I have submitted testimony on this topic before, so I'll try to shake it up a bit.

Legislation banning trans athlete's participation in sports has garnered outsized attention in the past 6+ years. This is *not* because of an "onslaught" of trans girls "dominating" sports, nor because of any new research that indicates a retained athletic advantage. If anything, the most recent study on this topic finds a disadvantage for trans women (cited below).

Instead, this is all a political move – lobbyists and republican government officials have used this as a scare tactic to drum up votes on the right. I believe the public is beginning to see through this scapegoat tactic, and I hope you will too. In this case, the ballot measure is funded by one out of state billionaire ahead of the midterm elections. Kids' rights to participate in school activities (sports included) should not be used as a political pawn.

Bans like this ballot measure will not only affect trans youth – they will hurt *all* girls' participation in sports.

A ban on trans athletes would heighten pressure on young girls to appear "feminine enough," which sometimes means performing worse athletically, in order to avoid being "accused" of being trans. We have seen these accusations happen in many states where transgender athlete and locker room bans are in place. I personally cannot imagine competing in high school sports in a climate like that. I sometimes imagine my tall, broad-shouldered high school self and wonder what people would say about me if I were competing in this hyper-scrutinizing era of youth sports.

We have seen a terrible rollback of trans participation policies at the elite level of sports. Again, there is no science to back this up. It's currently nearly impossible for trans

women to compete in collegiate sports or pursue a professional sports career. That's a larger problem that folks like me hope to fight against – right now, we need to protect the sports opportunities for youth, especially trans youth in school sports. Sports can be incredibly positive and formative experiences – let's keep them safeguarded for *all* kids.

Thank you,

Val Moyer

References:

Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport. *Transgender Women Athletes and Elite Sport: A Scientific Review*. Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, 2022,

<https://cces.ca/transgender-women-athletes-and-elite-sport-scientific-review>

Hamilton B, Brown A, Montagner-Moraes S, *et al.* Strength, power and aerobic capacity of transgender athletes: a cross-sectional study. *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 2024;**58**:586-597.