

April 14, 2026

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

My name is Finn Teach and I am a resident of Portland, Maine. I am writing to submit testimony in opposition to the proposed ballot measure currently before this body, and to respectfully urge the Legislature to exercise its authority to place a competing measure on the ballot — one that would enshrine explicit protections from discrimination against transgender children in Maine schools.

This proposed measure is, at its core, an extreme and blanket prohibition that does not reflect the values of Maine communities. Its language is vague and poorly defined, offering a one-size-fits-all approach that schools would find exceedingly difficult and costly to implement. Rather than helping students, it would create chaos and distraction in our classrooms, and expose school districts to significant and unnecessary litigation risk.

Proponents of this measure often cite competitive fairness in girls' sports as their central justification. But we are talking about children — not elite or professional athletes. The purpose of school sports is not to produce champions. It is to teach young people cooperation, discipline, resilience, and teamwork. When we reduce that experience to a question of who wins, we miss the point entirely. Moreover, the science does not support the sweeping assumptions this measure relies upon. Athletic performance varies enormously among all people, regardless of gender. Many women outperform many men across a wide range of sports. The overlap between genders in physical ability is substantial, and blanket policies that ignore this complexity do a disservice to every student.

If we are genuinely committed to protecting and supporting girls in sports, our energy belongs elsewhere: closing the persistent gaps in funding for girls' programs, ensuring equal access to facilities and coaching, and addressing the real barriers that hold young women back. This measure does none of that. Instead, it would require schools to divert scarce resources toward policing measures — including, remarkably, having staff verify the birth certificates of all students simply to use a restroom.

I also want to address the undercurrent of fear that sometimes accompanies this debate. When we talk about protecting children, we should mean it fully and consistently. If we are serious about safety in schools, we must ensure that credible allegations of misconduct are investigated and prosecuted — that is where protective energy belongs. Applying broad and

unfounded assumptions about any group of children, including transgender girls, does not make our schools safer. It causes harm to kids who are already among the most vulnerable in our communities.

Beyond the practical harms, this measure strikes at the foundation of Maine's civil rights framework. Our Maine Human Rights Act exists to protect all of us from government overreach. This proposal would repeal those foundational protections, leaving Mainers — including our most vulnerable children — with fewer civil rights than they have today.

Finally, I urge this Committee to consider the origins of this proposal. It was funded entirely by a single out-of-state billionaire, with the explicit goal of influencing Maine's 2026 elections. Maine people have always prized our independence and our democracy. We should not allow outside money to rewrite our laws at the expense of our children's dignity and safety.

For all of these reasons, I ask that the Legislature propose a competing ballot measure: one that would affirmatively protect transgender children from discrimination in Maine's public schools. Maine's kids deserve to learn in an environment where they are safe, respected, and protected by law.

Thank you for your time and your service to our state.

Respectfully submitted,

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