



Testimony before the Committee on Judiciary

LD 930 An Act To Allow Only Students of Female Gender to Participate in Women's and Girls' Scholastic Sports

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and Members of the Committee:

I am Rev. Jane Field, a resident of Portland and an ordained Presbyterian (PCUSA) minister. I am the Executive Director of the Maine Council of Churches which has seven member-denominations (Episcopal, Lutheran (ELCA), Presbyterian (PCUSA), Quaker, Unitarian Universalist, United Methodist and United Church of Christ) who represent 437 local congregations in Maine with 55,000 members statewide. I am testifying on behalf of the Council **in opposition to LD 930**.

As people of faith, united in our belief that every human being is a child of God, created in the image of God and beloved by God, we promote the full humanity and dignity of every person. We call for the full civil, political, and economic rights of people of all races, creeds, gender expressions, and sexual orientations.

Sex assigned at birth is not necessarily an accurate predictor of the true identity a person lives into. We celebrate a person's discovery of their true gender identity and the ability of medical science to assist in that process of living into that identity. There is no justification for treating any person in a manner contrary to that identity, regardless of what a birth certificate may indicate. We believe that God blesses anyone who is able to live into their true identity. We therefore believe that school sports should welcome transgender people for reasons including the following:

We know that athletic participation provides all sorts of positive effects on children and young adults, from reduced rates of depression to positive physical health outcomes. But more importantly, high school and college sports are a common space for community-building. By excluding transgender girls from these spaces, it sends a clear message to all trans kids that they don't belong. It also teaches all children that their transgender peers deserve derision and exclusion that can even lead to deadly violence against trans people.

These bills irresponsibly pit students against each other and schools against their own policies and creeds. Schools across the country know that transgender students, like all students, thrive when they are treated with dignity and respect. When school officials recognize that a transgender girl is a girl during the school day, but then treat her as if she's a boy when sports practice starts, it is hurtful to the student and disrupts the school's policy of treating all kids fairly.

It's not an either/or scenario. We can celebrate girls' sports and not discriminate against transgender children, and make sure that young people can thrive and excel. We can protect fairness, equity and inclusion for everyone.

Transgender women and girls play sports for the same reason thousands of other young people across Maine choose to do so - to learn teamwork, leadership and self-discipline, and to build a sense of belonging with their peers. We shouldn't discriminate against kids and ban them from playing because they are transgender. To deny them that opportunity is a moral failure to love and support our children as they are.

Transgender children are not harming girls' sports. They are valued members of our school and sports communities, our faith communities, and our families.

As people of faith, we are impelled by the example of Jesus to treat all persons with love and dignity and especially to care for those who are marginalized by society. We stand opposed to this bill and ask that you vote **OUGHT NOT TO PASS** on LD 930.