

Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
In OPPOSITION to
LD 926 An Act to Ban Biological Males from Participating in Women's Sports
and
LD 1401 An Act to Ban Biological Males in School Athletic programs and Activities
Designated for Females at Schools that Receive Federal Funding
May 6, 2021

Senator Carney, Representative Harnett and Members of the Committee:

My name is Evelyn Johnson Moore and I am the co-chair of the Public Policy Committee of the Maine Council of Churches. The Council has seven member-denominations who represent 437 local churches with 55,000 parishioners across the state. I am testifying on behalf of the Council **in opposition to LD 926 and LD1401.**

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.

We believe that God blesses everyone, including our trans brothers and sisters, wanting each of us to live into our true selves. 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 but to especially care for those who are marginalized by society. We stand opposed to these bills and ask that you vote **OUGHT NOT TO PASS** on LD 926 and LD1401.