

April 23, 2023

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary Committee.
Thank you for the opportunity to give testimony today.

My name is Kate Easter. I am a resident of Limestone in the great Aroostook County. I have lived here most of my life. I am proud to say that I am From the County and I **support LD1412, “RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine Establishing That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law.” I am asking you to do the same.**

One truth I know is that County folks are known for our commitment to our communities and that translates into a willingness to sit down, talk with each other, and learn from each other’s lived experience. I have had conversations with those on the other side of the aisle and while we may not agree on every topic, we do agree that I deserve to be protected and safe in our hometowns. We agree that our LGBTQ+ friends and family deserve to go out to eat in our local restaurants and be served without fear of discrimination.

This bill will align Maine’s Constitution with the Maine Human Rights Act, and protect people based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical or mental disability, ancestry or national origin of an individual.

I work professionally serving the advocates who support those fleeing from domestic violence and who need shelter and permanent housing. I know what forms discrimination already takes for survivors of domestic & sexual abuse and violence. Add to that being LGBTQ+ and a survivor can lose access to safe housing and employment in the community of their choice because of unscrupulous landlords or business owners. This will change that dynamic and provide the means for all Mainers to stay safe in our state.

I am a member of the LGBTQ+ community & I volunteer with Pride Aroostook, our local Pride organization supporting LGBTQ+ County folks and our allies. I am deeply committed to helping Maine, and especially Aroostook, be the place where our youth

can learn safely, our families & neighbors can live in peace, and we can all be protected as we live our lives as we are.

It is so important to support this opportunity to show the rest of the country why Maine Leads. This bill helps protect and strengthen the law already in existence. It protects our youth and older adults. It offers a way for Mainers to know that our state and our elected representatives support us and our existence.

I hope that you will take into consideration the will of your constituents and vote to pass LD 1412 “RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine Establishing That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law.”

I want my Aroostook County representatives and senators to stand with and protect all their neighbors. By doing so you show that you care about ALL of Aroostook County’s residents and I am deeply grateful to you for that.