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LD 1412

Testimony at Judiciary Committee Hearing for LD 1412

I am Nancy Murdock and I thank you for this opportunity to speak for the group I represent, Equal Rights Maine. We are volunteers. We are Mainers working to educate and advocate for equal rights protections in our Constitution, the foundation of our democracy. We have carefully studied the history of our state and federal constitutions and why their protections have never extended equally to a majority of the population - to women and other discriminated groups. We see that laws protecting us are at risk of change and removal and we know that our country and this state must be certain that all its citizens are equally protected by the law.

The United States and its separate states have the oldest written constitutions among the nations of the world. When they were written, in the 18th and 19th centuries, women and people of other races and backgrounds had few rights as citizens. Our Constitutions are designed to be modified as times change. Most nations and 26 of our states of America have already updated their founding documents by adding positive statements of legal equality for all citizens. Maine can do that now, with the amendment proposed by this bill.

We urge the committee and the state legislature to support this important amendment and send it to the voters, to do what is necessary for a true, living democracy. It is long overdue.

Thank you.