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Testimony of Representative Holly Eaton

LD 260, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law

Submitted to the Judiciary Committee

Good morning, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Representative Holly Eaton, and I proudly represent House District 15, which includes many of Maine's hardworking coastal and island communities. I submit this testimony in strong support of **H.P. 163**, a resolution to amend the Maine Constitution to ensure that all residents are afforded equal rights under the law.

The principle of equality is foundational to our democracy. Yet, our state constitution lacks explicit language protecting individuals from discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, ancestry, or national origin. By adopting this amendment, Maine would join other states that have taken this necessary step to enshrine protections that reflect our values of fairness and dignity for all.

This amendment is not just symbolic—it is a vital safeguard. It ensures that our legal system unequivocally upholds the rights of every Maine resident and provides clear guidance in the face of future legal challenges. While our state has made progress in passing anti-discrimination laws, constitutional protections carry a higher level of durability and security, preventing rights from being eroded by changing political climates.

District 15: Brooklin, Deer Isle, Eagle Island Township, Frenchboro, Southwest Harbor, Stonington, Swan's Island, Tremont, Isle au Haut, Vinalhaven

As a legislator, I have heard from constituents who face discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations. Many have expressed the fear that their rights are fragile—that without constitutional backing, their legal protections are subject to legislative shifts. This amendment sends a clear message: in Maine, every person is valued, and every person deserves to be treated with fairness and respect.

I urge the committee to support this resolution and move it forward to the voters of Maine. Our residents deserve the opportunity to affirm their commitment to equal rights at the ballot box. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Representative Holly Eaton

House District 15