

Klarissia Barnett
Bangor
LD 260

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee Judiciary.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee.

My name is Klarissia Barnett and I am a resident of Bangor. I am here today in support of LD 260.

The Inclusive Equal Rights Amendment is a cause I will continue to fight for and whole heartedly believe should be apart of the Constitution of our state for so many reasons; it truly saddens me that we even have to have this conversation. But, in our greatest efforts to move forward, continue to protect every human being and provide equal treatment for all, we have to continue to speak up and show up. The Trump Administration will not move us backward and must be stopped.

I have a lot of feelings on this subject — I'm from a very small conservative town in PA. I always knew I was different, and my morals and values did not align with the rest. Racism, sexism, homophobia, and white supremacy were everywhere. I needed to express myself, branch out of that life and away from those views I knew were not okay. I wanted to live life open minded and full of love. I moved to Orlando right out of high school and lived there for many years. I "grew up" there. I became a part of a community where I knew, felt, and supported love is love..and that community was beautiful. The Pulse nightclub was a second home to me, my friends, and our community. I am straight but that did not matter and does not matter. I was accepted and very much loved. My happiest days were spent there. My best friends and family were the LBGTQIA+ community, still are, and always will be. When the Pulse tragedy happened in 2016, I knew that no matter what was happening in our country, I would never let hate win. Even as our community mourned the loss of 49 angels that night on June 12, the love I saw as we all came together was more powerful than I could ever express. I will never forget that feeling and will carry it with me as long as I live. It would not define us. We would continue to fight for them and each other. Every human deserves to live as they are and love how they choose. We must continue dancing and remember love will always win.

This is why I support this amendment and why it is critical that we ensure it passes: to protect the equal rights of every human being and the Constitution.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD260. Thank you!