



**Maine Medical
Association**



TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND THE MAINE OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

In Support Of

LD 260 Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish that all Maine Residents Have Equal Protection Under the Law

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
Room 438, State House, Augusta, Maine
Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Good Afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Lani Graham, and I am Maine's former Chief Public Health Officer. I am submitting this testimony in support of LD 260 Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish that all Maine Residents Have Equal Protection Under the Law on behalf of the Maine Medical Association and the Maine Osteopathic Association.

The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing more than 4,000 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA's mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people. The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services in order to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State.

We have joined to advocate with one voice to testify to support LD 260. We acknowledge that both recognized and implicit bias plays an outsized role in access to health care and treatment. We work daily to eliminate such discrimination, and this amendment to the Maine Constitution will support that work to ensure that people have equal access to care and are treated fairly in all healthcare settings.

When everyone has equal protection and access to care, communities are healthier. While laws can support equity, they do not provide the safety of a constitutional amendment to ensure permanent protection. We must ensure that our citizens have the equal rights we cherish regardless of what happens at the federal level, especially as it relates to areas like domestic violence and access to reproductive health care.

In 1974, Maine was the 31st state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the federal constitution, but it has consistently failed to ensure those rights in its own constitution.¹ Twenty-eight states have already amended their constitutions, including states as diverse as Texas and Montana. Now is the time for Maine.

Thank you for considering the thoughts of Maine's physicians and public health community about LD 260.

Best,

Lani Graham, MD, MPH

¹<https://www.nytimes.com/1974/01/19/archives/maine-31st-state-to-ratify-equal-rights-amendment.html#:~:text=18%E2%80%94Maine%20today%20became%20the%2031st%20state%20to,the%20State%20Senate%20voted%2019%20to%2011>