

Emily Pines
Portland
LD 260

Emily Pines
Portland, Maine
March 3, 2025

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 Emily Pines. I'm a resident of Portland Maine and I am a parent as well as a Licensed therapist working with children and adolescents. I am writing this testimony on behalf of myself only.

I am writing to you in support of LD 260.

I have worked for the past 10 plus years in Maine and within the educational system providing therapeutic support to youth. I have seen how lack of protection for discrimination impacts children and adolescents and can create a domino effect in impacting negatively their success in educational endeavors.

This bill has the ability to ensure that even if state statutes or laws change, equal rights for all are still protected in Maine's constitution. This bill is critical right now as our public discourse is veering toward animosity and anger toward LGBTQ plus and transgender communities, many of whom are vulnerable students, who may not have the privilege to come before this committee to share their experiences and request to be safely educated and protected as they do so. As a society and a state, we worry about youth mental health and understand that when youth are experiencing trauma, this impacts their ability to focus and learn. When their basic civil rights are not being addressed, this can certainly create trauma

29 states have explicit sex equality protections within their constitutions, and a growing number, like Maine, are passing broader human rights protections in their constitutions, often called an "Inclusive Equal Rights Amendment". Our students deserve to be in this company and Maine has always proven itself to be independent, supportive and protective of all within our state.

This amendment would give our state new tools to address discrimination and violations of civil rights. It also seems that states have a timely ability to step up and protect their citizens

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the committee. I urge you to vote ought to pass" on LD260. Thank you.