

Valerie Wilfong
Stow
LD 260

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

I am Valerie Wilfong, a lifelong Mainer and member of the League of Women Voters, writing today to urge you to vote to pass LD 260, the Maine Inclusive Equal Rights Amendment bill.

In 1972, I was a junior in high school when the Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment and sent it to the states for ratification. I was so excited then to support a change to the Constitution which would address wage disparity among the sexes, sexual harassment and violence, and unequal representation in governing bodies. I also remember the vitriol and misinformation of Phyllis Schlafly and others which stalled its progress in the states.

We have made strides in the ensuing years. Women make up about a third of the representation in state houses and Congress (although we are still just over half of the population). The wage gap has been narrowed, so full time female workers are making 83% of what their male counterparts make. The Me, Too Movement has raised the awareness of sexual harassment in the workplace. But this progress is on shifting sand.

As the current political climate would indicate, without codification rights are not sacred for women or any other group.

I urge you today, as a seventy year old woman, to vote “ought to pass” out of Committee on LD 260 and to support its passage on the floor of the senate and House. Thank you.