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Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier in support of
**LD 260, Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to
Establish That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law**
Before the Joint Standing Judiciary Committee

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Kristen Cloutier, and I represent House District 94, which includes part of my hometown of Lewiston. 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 Rights Under the Law.**

The current political climate has created renewed urgency around constitutional protections for equal rights. Recent policy shifts at the federal level have highlighted how vulnerable hard-won progress can be without explicit constitutional safeguards.

The unfortunate and uncomfortable truth is that despite legislative and judicial rulings over the years, women still face significant inequalities. Women are disproportionately affected by poverty, suffer from widespread gender-based violence, experience sex-based pay discrimination in all occupational categories, continue to face sexual harassment and encounter discriminatory treatment by employers.

By enshrining equal rights in our state constitution, Maine can provide lasting protection against discrimination regardless of changes in the political landscape. This amendment would strengthen our commitment to equality and ensure that all Maine residents are truly equal under the law.

I urge the committee to support LD 260.

Thank you for your time and consideration.