

Sarah Shepro  
Portland, Maine  
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee Judiciary,

My name is Sarah Shepro, I'm a resident of Portland. I'm writing in support of LD 260.

Equal rights under the law for ALL people has always been an important and urgent issue, but the current political climate highlights the urgency of codifying the protection of equal rights under the law at the state level. Marginalized groups have never been able to rely on the Federal government for this fundamental recognition of rights - for more than a century, people have advocated for a Federal Equal Rights Amendment to be added to the U.S. Constitution.

Mainers can and should do better for all of our citizens. Whether or not you understand or "condone" the experience of another should never be grounds for denying them equal rights under the law. We all deserve to have our humanity recognized - being queer, being nonbinary, being Black, being Christian, being 85; those characteristics don't make anyone less of a person.

As a woman, it's important to me that the state I live in recognizes in a more binding manner my fundamental rights under the law. I also believe that the guarantee of rights for other, more marginalized groups is essential to upholding protections for all. Can we really be sure that protections of our rights are embedded, fundamental to governing, if we ignore the rights of some and not others?

This is not about political leanings, this is not about being 'woke'. Voting against this would be to vote against the most basic tenets of a good democracy - that we are all equal, that we all have the same rights.

Thank you for your time and consideration.