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LD 260

Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law

My name is Aspen Ruhlin, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Mabel Wadsworth Center. I would like to thank Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and the rest of the Judiciary Committee for hearing this testimony. Mabel Wadsworth Center is a feminist health center that has served Bangor and the surrounding communities for over 40 years. We serve patients of all genders, and predominantly provide care to cis women and to members of the transgender community.

All Mainers deserve equal protection under our Constitution. As it stands, that's not the current reality. Our Constitution was written more than 200 years ago and while it is an important document, it is a document limited by being written by fallible humans in the culture of the time. This document was written over a century before women could vote or have a credit card in their own name. This document was written almost 200 years before Maine law protected transgender people from discrimination. There are many more examples that could be given here of how now-protected classes in Maine were not considered at the time of our Constitution being written.

The people we serve deserve equal protection and representation under our Constitution. While we have protective laws in Maine, they are not enough. Along with the fact that current laws do not provide adequate avenues for justice in the case of discrimination and violence, all Mainers deserve explicit protection under our Constitution. Because of this, we ask that you vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 260.