



March 4, 2025

Senator Anne Carney, Chair  
Representative Amy Kuhn, Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary  
State House, Room 438  
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: L. D. 260, *RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law*

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Members of the Judiciary Committee;

My name is Sara Squires and I am the Public Policy Director for Disability Rights Maine (DRM), Maine's designated protection and advocacy agency for people with disabilities. On behalf of DRM and the individuals we serve, I want to thank you for the opportunity to offer 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*.

For centuries, people with disabilities have been pitied, ridiculed, objectified, considered less than, and denied the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers. While significant progress has been made in reshaping societal attitudes and implementing legal protections, much work remains. Laws like Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), and Maine's Human Rights Act provide essential safeguards, but these protections are not universally applied or respected.

Nearly thirty-five years after President George H.W. Bush signed the ADA into law, people with disabilities still face widespread discrimination and exclusion. Whether in businesses, government institutions, workplaces, or telecommunications, full access and equality remain elusive for many. In fact, as we continue to fight for full inclusion, we must confront ongoing legal challenges that threaten to undermine our civil rights.

Disability Rights Maine (DRM) acknowledges that LD 260 is not a panacea. It will not shift societal perceptions of people with disabilities or eradicate discrimination from our everyday

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MAINE'S PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY AGENCY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

lives. It will not change the attitudes of friends, neighbors, landlords, employers, or the public. However, passage of this bill would send a clear and powerful message: that the Maine legislature affirms the equality of all people, including those with disabilities, under the law. Furthermore, it demonstrates a commitment to a decision-making process that respects the voices of Maine voters.

LD 260 is an important step toward furthering equality and justice for individuals with disabilities in Maine. It is a reminder that, while we have made progress, we must continue to take deliberate actions to protect and affirm the rights of disabled people, ensuring that their dignity and humanity are upheld in every facet of society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara R. Squires". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Sara R. Squires  
Public Policy Director