

Debra Susi
Gardiner
LD 260

March 3rd, 2025

Subject: Testimony in Support of LD 260: An Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish That All Maine Residents have Equal Rights Under the Law.

Dear Chairperson Carney, Representative Holly Sargent of York and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Debra Susi and I am writing today to express my strong support for LD 260: An Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish That All Maine Residents have Equal Rights Under the Law.

Imagine, if you will, working a job with the same qualifications, same degree, same lived time experience on the job, same job reviews making less money than the your work colleague, a male. Imagine, if you will, going to your Employer and requesting a raise, citing the facts listed above only to be told that wasn't possible because "your husband is gainfully employed" and you are "supplemental income". My work, colleague, however, was "head-of-household". His salary was necessary because he was "supporting a growing family". Even the mention of my family, then 6 and 8, was evidently not enough to change the circumstances of my employment: I was female and not worthy of equal pay.

LD 260 recognizes Equality of rights under the law may not be denied or abridged by the State or any political subdivision of the State based on the actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical or mental disability, ancestry or national origin of an individual. Ensuring equality of rights under the law is not denied or abridged by the state or its subdivisions based on attributes such as race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical or mental disability, ancestry, or national origin is fundamental for several reasons:

1. Protection of Fundamental Rights: Safeguarding individuals from discrimination, ensures that everyone has equal access to opportunities, resources, and protections under the law. This aligns with the principles of fairness and justice central to democratic societies.

2. Promotion of Social Harmony: Preventing discriminatory practices.

3. Economic Benefits: When individuals are protected from discrimination, they are more likely to participate fully in the economy, leading to increased productivity and economic growth. Equal rights provisions can help in tapping into the potential of all citizens, regardless of their background.

4. Legal Clarity and Consistency: Explicitly stating these protections in the law, provides clear guidelines for both individuals and institutions, reducing ambiguities and ensuring consistent application of anti-discrimination principles.

Doesn't it seem common sense to pay people performing the same work the same pay? I was not able to access that equity as a manufacturing engineer performing the same tasks as my colleague. LD 260 upholds the dignity and rights of all individuals and ensures no one is subjected to unfair treatment based on inherent or perceived characteristics.

I should be grateful my employer turned down my request for a pay raise twenty plus years ago because I returned to Education where I have been happily employed for the past 38 years. It is my sincere hope your committee recommends passage of LD 260.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Debra Susi

VPA Chair & Theatre Arts Instructor
Maine Central Institute