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LD 260

My name is Brennan Edwards, and I am a high school student—a gay minor—living in Representative Laurel Libby’s district. To say that I feel scared would be an understatement. Every day, I walk in fear of being called a slur, being harassed, or being subjected to hateful remarks simply because of who I am. The rising tide of intolerance is not just unsettling—it is terrifying. I see it in my school, in my community, and across the country. It is emboldened by rhetoric that seeks to erase, diminish, or dehumanize people like me.

While I recognize that there have been efforts within your legislative body to support and protect LGBTQ+ individuals, the reality is that we are still far from safe. We face relentless threats to our dignity, our mental well-being, and even our physical safety. For my friends, my peers, and for every person who has ever felt like they have to hide who they are out of fear, passing the Equal Rights Amendment is not just a legal necessity—it is a moral imperative. It is a step toward ensuring that no one in Maine, or anywhere in this country, is treated as less than simply because of their gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other inherent part of who they are.

This is not a partisan issue; it is a human rights issue. Supporting this amendment means standing up not just for the LGBTQ+ community, but for all marginalized groups—women, people of color, religious minorities, and anyone who has ever been discriminated against for simply existing. It means standing up for your sisters, your mothers, your children, your gay friends, and your friends of all identities. Equality under the law should not be up for debate.

I ask each and every one of you to take a moment and reflect: What have you done to protect me, my friends, and my classmates who belong to communities that face hate and discrimination every day? Have you stood up when it was easier to stay silent? Have you used your voice, your position, your influence to create real change?

Because neutrality is not an option when people’s lives and rights are on the line. This is not just a Maine issue. This is not just an American issue. This is a human issue. And I urge you—no, I beg you—to do the right thing. Pass the Equal Rights Amendment. Show us that our state values fairness, justice, and the right of every person to live freely and without fear.

The time for action is now.