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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee Judiciary. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee. My name is Hailey Gilmore, I live in Kennebunk and I am here in complete and utter support of bill LD260.

The Equal Rights Amendment is not just a legal necessity—it is a moral imperative. For too long, women and other marginalized groups in this country have been denied full constitutional equality, leaving their rights vulnerable to shifting political tides rather than firmly enshrined in our state's highest law. We must solidify these protections now so we can focus on the many other pressing issues that are threatening the integrity of this country. The court has the opportunity to correct this historic injustice and affirm that equality is neither conditional nor up for debate.

I could list countless statistics on the devastating effects of inequality across the U.S., but I'll leave that to others here today. Some of you seem to not realize that this **will**—and already does—affect you directly. I know many of you have children whose future should be top of mind when considering this bill. But even if you don't, you likely have a sister, brother, cousin, or even a mother who would benefit greatly from this common-sense decision.

Ratifying this bill isn't about taking away rights, privileges, or benefits from one group who already has them—it's about ensuring that **everyone** has the same starting point to grow from. Granting others their long-overdue rights does not mean those in power will lose their own. This isn't a loss for anyone; it's a **win for everyone**. Equality strengthens our economy, our families, and our future.

When the history books are written, do you want your name to be listed among those who not only ignored blatant inequality but actively worked against the rights of their own family members, friends, and even themselves? This is a defining moment—one that future generations will remember. The question is not whether history will move forward, but whether this court will choose to be on the right side of it.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD260. Thank you!