

Mea Starr Tavares
Stockton Springs, Maine
March 4th, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee Judiciary, thank you for this opportunity to share my voice with you all, in service to our collective humanity. My name is Mea Tavares, I am a lifetime resident of Maine residing in Stockton Springs. I am here today in support of LD 260.

I have been living as an out Transgender person in Maine since 2001. At 40 years old now, in my community I am considered an elder. This isn't because 40 is old, but because the degree of systemic and social adversity we as a population experience - in our access to basic health care, housing and employment, as well as the durational stress of increased incidents of violence - physical, social and emotional, statistically shortens our lifespans to the degree where to live to 40 is statistically significant. The most vulnerable among us are those who are also experiencing systemic racism and misogyny. Since the rise of Trump and the subsequent emboldening of racism, xenophobia and transphobia in this country, Transgender murders nationwide have near-doubled, with the majority of transgender homicide victims in America being Black and Latina Trans women. This data is from 2019-now, with violence escalating so quickly in the past few months that we can't catch up to get an accurate count of the lives lost.

Taking this opportunity to ensure equality of rights under the law for those of us who are currently experiencing the threat of revocation of our most basic rights and safeties would ensure that Maine continues to stand in integrity against the rise of fear and the permission being granted by those in federal power to see our neighbors as "other" in a tide that, left unchecked, will eventually take us all. I love Maine and I believe in the ways we can grow as people to care for one another better. The passing of LD 260 would make clear that Maine values all of our community members equally. At its essence, this is a common sense action that we still have the opportunity to take. I urge you to take it now, for our collective humanity.

Please, for our integrity and our humanity, I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 260. Thank you.