

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee and to submit testimony. My name is Deborah Bicknell and I am a resident of Yarmouth Maine. I am writing as a citizen of the great State of Maine and as a citizen of the world. Having traveled and worked extensively worldwide I have had the opportunity to be in many places where personalities govern rather than principles, where chaos rather than constitutions are the order of the day. One of the defining features of the United States of America when operating at its best, is its adherence to laws rather than to the whims of political parties and personalities with grand persuasions. I believe that the Maine Human Rights Act is one of those laws which helps citizens by offering care and protection under the law.

I am writing to ask you to oppose LD 1432: An Act to Remove Consideration of Gender Identity from the Maine Human Rights Act. The Maine Humans Right Act was created to assure the safety, care and dignity of all Mainers, especially those proven most vulnerable to discrimination. It is hard to imagine a reasonable reason for removing "gender identity" from a protected class. I have to imagine instead it perhaps is blanket move to remove all bills and initiatives with these words in them without understanding the meaning or reason behind them. In the case of the Maine Humans Right Act, gender identity is a necessary safeguard in helping to protect many of our Maine friends, neighbors and loved ones who are most vulnerable to bigotry and violence.

We are privileged to live in a country who aspires to be "the land of the free and the home of the brave." I believe that all Americans have a right to safety and dignity, as I imagine all of the honorable members of the Judiciary Committee do. Therefore, I hope you will act with bravery so that all people in our great state might be, and feel more free. Please vote ought not to pass on LD 1432.

Thank you for reading my testimony and for your public service.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah E. Bicknell