

May 8, 2025

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

I strongly oppose [LD 1432](#) and I hope that you will too.

Maine expanded the Human Rights Act to include sexuality and gender 20 years ago. Some of us remember these campaigns well (I wrote my dissertation about them) and some may not remember at all. We hope that social progress will be taken for granted by future generations. Yet we also should take time to learn from our shared recent history to remember that we expanded the MHRA for extremely clear and good reasons and nothing has happened over these 2 decades that change that.

The work to persuade the Legislature and the voting public to include sexuality and gender as protected classes took LGBTQ people and their friends and families introducing themselves to their neighbors, bravely choosing visibility at a time when their civil rights were not protected. They recognized that the proliferation of dehumanizing stereotypes needed to be challenged, despite the risks this brought to individuals. Ultimately, 55% of Maine voters, in 2005, voted to maintain the [Extension of Civil Rights Protections Regardless of Sexual Orientation](#). It is horrifying to think the Legislature of 2025 is considering rescinding this vote by the people. It is horrifying to recognize that this proliferation of dehumanizing images and stereotypes continues, sometimes proliferated by those in power, when we might instead choose to create communities that promote public safety and belonging. Dehumanization, stripping rights and increasingly “othering” targeted groups leads us toward violence and away from our collective mission and values. We need the Legislature to immediately and vehemently reject this path.

The notion that we have less commitment to civil rights in 2025 than in 2005 is disturbing. We are seeing the degradation of our Federal commitment to human rights

and civil rights in ways that violate basic norms many of us believed were well established. This puts more pressure on the State Government to ensure that we maintain our Constitutional obligations including equal protection of all of us.

We all depend on some stability in our legal system. We depend on stability in our workplace laws, access to education, and our presumption that we are all going to be treated fairly in public life. When this basic expectation is threatened by raising the specter of withdrawing civil rights in a capricious manner we are all thrown into more chaos, which we are hearing is “the point” but I deeply hope is not the goal of the Maine Legislature.

Folks in specifically targeted communities will experience even more distress as their rights are subject to question. Regardless of what ultimately is decided, they are reminded that their inclusion in our full public life is contingent and precarious. That’s an extremely threatening message to receive. I hope those sending it reflect on how significant it is to choose to put this threat forward.

Maine can be proud of our commitment to civil rights. We also can be proud of a growing commitment to human rights, and extending our capacity for welcoming and belonging. We know the future of Maine will require the best from all of us.

Please reject LD 1432 and offer reassurance to targeted people and all Maine people that we will maintain our core commitment to civil rights. Finally, please consider a stronger stance on the Equal Rights Amendment in the future- it is clear that we need to protect civil rights in our Constitution to remove the possibility that we will see our rights removed by the whim of a different Legislature or Governor.

Thank you,

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