

Norman Allen
First Parish Unitarian Universalist in Portland
LD 2239

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

My name is Rev. Norman Allen. I proudly and happily serve First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Portland, where I am also a resident. As a person of faith who believes that all people are of inherent dignity and worthiness – that all of us carry a spark of the divine - I am opposed to ballot measure LD 2239.

I hold the Maine Human Rights Act close to my heart. Its existence helped inspire my move here, and it continues to be an inspiration to my work in the community. Because the Act protects every resident of Maine, any effort to diminish its breadth and beauty must be resisted.

I understand that you have limited options at this point in the process, but I feel called to register my deep concern about a ballot measure that so clearly reverses the intention of the Human Rights Act. In doing so, it puts Maine's youngest residents in the glare of the spotlight once again, making their lives the subject of debate.

Among my many concerns is the simple ineptitude of the measure's composition. Its lack of clarity means that its application would create confusion and conflict among educators, administrators, and students. The energy wasted should be focused on learning, on building community, and on helping students to live fully into their own, unique potential.

It gives me great hope that people of faith across the state have gathered in solidarity to oppose LD 2239. I'm honored to join my voice with theirs, and I appreciate this opportunity to share my thoughts with you.— Rev. Norman Allen