



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Lynn Copeland in support of
LD 1412, Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine
Establishing That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Lynn Copeland, and I am honored to represent the citizens of House District 130, in Saco. I stand before you this morning to testify in support of LD 1412, a Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine Establishing That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law, which has been brought forward by Representative Reckitt.

This bill focuses on equal rights for all humans in Maine under the law.

Fact: women currently make just 78 cents for every dollar earned by men. Black women earn only 64 cents and Latinas only 54 cents for each dollar earned by white men.

I've heard objections to this bill that focus on women being forced into military combat. The truth is every individual, whether male or female, must pass the same strenuous training to be in actual combat. If a woman or man does not have the physical ability, they will not be permitted to engage in combat.

This bill prompts a statewide conversation where all Maine people can express their thoughts. Passing LD 1412 does not mean it becomes law. It means it gets printed and put on the ballot for the voters to ultimately decide using the ballot box. I would like to read the proposed bill's language to you:

"Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to prohibit the denial or abridgment by the State or any political subdivision of the State of equal rights based on the actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical or mental disability, ancestry or national origin of an individual?"

Laws can be changed. Protections for human rights should be a part of our Maine Constitution. It's time for Maine to have an Equal Rights Amendment for All. Pass this bill and let the voters decide!

Respectfully,

District 130: Saco (Part)