



**Sally Cluchey**  
15 Brickyard Way  
Bowdoinham, ME 04008  
Phone: (207) 814-8879  
[Sally.Cluchey@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Sally.Cluchey@legislature.maine.gov)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
2 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002  
(207) 287-1400  
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

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**Testimony of Rep. Sally Cluchey 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**

Good morning, Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Sally Cluchey and I represent House District 52 which includes the residents of Richmond, Bowdoinham, and the northern half of Bowdoin. I am pleased to be here today to support *LD 1412, Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine Establishing That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law*.

Last summer, I met a young woman, a senior in high school, who told me she testified at the Legislature last session on the ERA bill. She said that she and her friends were flabbergasted by how many hours and hours of testimony people gave on the issue of equal rights. She then said, "older generations just don't seem to get what my peers and I already know. This is a simple question: Do you think everyone is deserving of equal protection under the law, or no? Yes or no? And I cannot believe that some people in the Legislature think the answer is no."

When I'm considering legislation, I try to always ask the question, "what is the benefit of passing this legislation, and what is the harm in passing this legislation?"

What's the benefit if this passes? All Maine people, regardless of their actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical or mental disability, ancestry or national origin **are protected equally** under the law. What's the harm?

There is no down side here. Giving the people of Maine the opportunity to weigh in on this question should be the easiest decision we'll make all session. I urge you to unanimously pass LD 1412.