



# Maine Human Rights Commission

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February 4, 2025

The Honorable Anne Carney, Senate Chair  
The Honorable Amy Kuhn, House Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

*Re: An Act to Add Political Affiliation as a Protected Class to the Maine Human Rights Act - LD 10*

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

The Maine Human Rights Commission ("Commission") is Maine's quasi-independent, nonpartisan State agency charged with enforcing our state anti-discrimination law, the Maine Human Rights Act, 5 M.R.S. §§ 4551, *et seq.* ("MHRA"). The Commission is statutorily charged with the duties of: investigating, conciliating, and at times litigating protected-class discrimination cases under the MHRA; promulgating rules and regulations to effectuate the Act; and making recommendations for further legislation or executive action concerning infringements on human rights in Maine. 5 M.R.S. § 4566(7), (11). With those duties in mind, the Commission is pleased to provide this testimony neither for nor against LD 1663.

The MHRA addresses adverse treatment against individuals based primarily upon their innate characteristics (things one does not choose about oneself). "Political affiliation" might be an outlier within the MHRA's current framework. The proposed subsection 8-I definition of who would be a member of the protected class is exceedingly broad; "political affiliation" would "mean belonging to or endorsing a party or a particular political philosophy, creed or ideal." Adopting this definition would provide MHRA protected-class status to anyone who endorsed any political idea. Given what would be LD 10's wide scope of coverage, the Commission anticipates that it would receive significant numbers of complaints related to political affiliation; the Commission's fiscal note reflects this foreseeable impact on the agency's operations.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony about LD 10. The Commission would be pleased to discuss these issues with you at your convenience, including at the work session on this matter.

Sincerely,

Kit Thomson Crossman, Executive Director

Cc: Commissioners