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Testimony of Rep. Julie McCabe in support of
**LD 260, Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of
Maine to Establish That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights
Under the Law**
Before the Joint Standing Judiciary Committee

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Judiciary Committee. My name is Julie McCabe and I represent part of the City of Lewiston.

I am humbled to submit testimony in support of **LD 260, Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law**, which would codify equal rights for all in Maine's constitution.

Our state must take a proactive step in passing this amendment without which too many Mainer's hard-fought protections are in jeopardy.

As a teacher in Maine over the past decade, I have responded to homophobic, transphobic, racist, ableist, anti-semitic and sexist statements and actions by students. Students often repeat what they hear from internet demi-gods that they fashion as moral leaders - where they find no others. We must seize this moment and provide that moral leadership.

Our response to discrimination, acquiescence or defiance, will determine whether we create a society in which everyone feels safe, valued and protected. We must safeguard the equal rights of every Mainer and signal to the next generation that everyone in our society is deserving of justice- and discrimination will not be tolerated here in Maine.

With this legislation, you have the opportunity to take a step towards stifling discrimination in our state. With LD 260, we say that Maine values everyone - no matter their sex, gender, religion, race, sexual orientation or ability - and we will fight for everyone equally.

Our national political climate and recent history shows us that long held precedents can be rewritten or tossed aside entirely by the stroke of a pen or simple majority. In Maine, we can stake our own path and move forward, not backwards.

Mainers look to the legislature for leadership, and this amendment today begs that of you; will you protect the most vulnerable in our society?

I implore you to vote to pass LD 260 for the sake of all Maine people.