



Janice Dodge

17 Vine St

Belfast, ME 04915

Phone: (207) 338-1626

Jan.Dodge@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. Jan Dodge 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 Committee on Judiciary

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Jan Dodge, and I represent House District #39, Belfast, Northport and Belmont. I am before you today to testify in strong support of **LD 260, the Maine Equal Rights Amendment.**

The 14th Amendment guarantees all citizens equal protection. Prohibitions against sex discrimination are contained in the Equal Pay Act, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, Title VII and Title IX, yet gender discrimination persists in employment, education, access to military advancement and sexual harassment.

I believe passage of this bill will strengthen protections. Constitutional equality will hopefully be more enduring for our daughters, nieces and granddaughters!

I am also here to honor the strong women in my family heritage. I honor my great-grandmother who supported her family as a divorced single mom while working as a teacher in an era before divorce was common. I honor my grandmother who treasured her right to vote and lived to know that the Equal Rights Amendment had passed in the U.S. Congress in 1972, but died before Maine ratified in 1974. Her role as my cheerleader began early in my life with her questioning phrase, "Who knows where your little feet will go?" I hope she knows I am here in the Legislature!!!! I also honor my mother and father who encouraged me and my brother to ignore gender barriers!

I stand here as a member of the 132nd Maine State Legislature to honor the belief that protections for human rights must be a part of our Constitution. May committee votes and our votes on the House floor provide a path to make this happen!

Thank you!!!