



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony of Rep. Rafael Macias 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 distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Rafael Macias, and I represent House District 51, which includes part of Topsham. I am here today to testify 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**.

I've been wrong a few times in my life. For thirty years, I was an atheist. I don't believe that anymore, thank God. The second time, I was wrong about my place in the world.

I believed I was the head of the household, the man of the house. It was my house, my rules, my roof, and under it, what I said went. It was a convenient belief. I thought my role was to protect my family, not just from dangers outside but from themselves. The things I feared most—losing the love of my life, losing a child, losing the power to control my fears—I tried to control the most.

I thought I was being a protector. A leader. Doing what I was supposed to do. And then, in a single moment, I realized how very wrong I was. I wasn't arguing with anyone. No one was calling me out. I was just sitting on my couch, meditating. And in an instant, it hit me like a ton of bricks. I was not above or better than anyone. I was not superior to my wife. I was not superior to my daughters. I was equal to every single person on this earth.

That realization hit hard.

I was overcome with grief, embarrassment, and shame. I sat there, ugly crying, as years of control, of thinking I had to keep everything in order, collapsed in an instant. And then, something else happened. Relief was right behind the tears.

Do you know the weight that lifts when you realize your happiness does not depend on someone else being less than you? That my security, my sense of self, and my worth did not require someone else's submission. I may have realized that truth early in my marriage, but my tired old jokes around the house hinted otherwise.

And here's what I learned next:

Saying you believe in equality isn't enough. It has to be felt. It has to be seen.

When I truly started treating my daughters, including our pink-haired youngest, as equals, my life and theirs remained out of balance at first. They didn't trust it. They didn't trust my words. Why would they? They'd grown up hearing the same lessons I had. They'd seen what was expected of them. They knew what was assumed about their role. It wasn't enough for me to say they were equal. They had to see it in my actions.

When they finally did, when they felt the difference in how I listened, respected their choices, and trusted them to be their own people, my belief in their equality took root in them.

That is what this amendment means. This is more than a legal change. It is a message. A foundation. A promise. This bill tells our daughters, wives, and all who come after us that they are equal. That their rights are the same.

The same treatment under the law.  
The same respect under any roof.  
The same dignity in the eyes of God.

And yet, every time we talk about equality, there are those who ask why we need this? Why? Because our laws do not explicitly guarantee equal rights for all. Because the rights of women, LGBTQ+ people, and marginalized communities have been debated, questioned, and restricted time and time again. Because we live in a country where women are still paid less than men. Where survivors of domestic violence still have to prove they deserve protection. Where people still believe that equality is a zero-sum game, as if recognizing the full humanity of someone else somehow takes something away from them. Because there are still people, good people, who haven't yet had their moment of realization that I had sitting on my couch. They haven't yet learned that equality does not mean a loss of power.

It means the freedom to stop fearing it. It means no one should have to beg for the same rights others take for granted.

For real.

Our commitment to this truth doesn't end with this amendment. It begins in our hearts and in our homes. If we pass LD 260, will it immediately fix every injustice? No. But it will do something just as important: It will say, once and for all, that in Maine, equality is not a matter of debate. It is a fundamental truth. It will tell future generations that their worth is not conditional. In this state, in this country, they do not have to fight to be seen as fully human. That we, at this moment, did something that should have been done long ago.

I urge you to pass LD 260 and take this step toward making equality not just an idea but a reality in Maine's Constitution. Our children are watching, and they deserve to know that their worth is not up for debate.

Thank you for your time and consideration.