

Testimony from Equal Rights Maine (Short version to be read aloud)

March 4, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee Judiciary,

My name is Robin Lincoln and I join you today on behalf of Equal Rights Maine. Since 2016, our group of volunteers has worked for recognition of the federal Equal Rights Amendment and, for the past three legislative sessions, for an equality amendment to our state constitution. Although our work began with gaining protections against all forms of *sex discrimination*, it has expanded, along with LD 260, to include all the protected categories laid out in the Maine Human Rights Act.

Equal Rights Maine has gathered hundreds of supporters during these years, as we have given talks and workshops bringing to light the gaping hole in both our federal and state constitutions. We have carefully studied the history and legal background of these constitutional issues. We have worked with our federal and state legislators to understand the need for clear language that includes those previously excluded from full legal rights: women and those groups represented by discrimination by sex and gender, race, religion, age, disability, and national origin.

Passing LD 260 would be a statement of principle, long overdue, making it clear that discrimination against someone because of *who they are* isn't tolerated in Maine. We need to ensure that Maine is a state that stands for equality now and into the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. **I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD260. Thank you!**

Sincerely,

Robin Lincoln, for Equal Rights Maine

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