

March 4, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee today. My name is Peter Yanz, and I'm a resident of St. George. I am here today to stand in support of LD 260. Our current national trends regarding the rights of marginalized groups are terrifying. As a queer man with a disability, and as the father of a nonbinary child, I am painfully aware every day of the efforts some are making to strip my rights and those of my children away. And as a white man born in this country, I'm still among the least vulnerable. Immigrants, women, trans and nonbinary people, and people of color are at so much more risk.

I am proud to live in a state that has taken steps to protect marginalized groups. Given our national climate, it is essential that we go further now by enshrining these rights in the state constitution. Research by the Trevor Project clearly demonstrates that having just one accepting adult in their lives lowers suicide rates among LGBTQ+ youth. How much more impact might it have to take this step as an entire state, stating unequivocally that the state will not discriminate based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression?

Let's make Maine safe for all people. I urge the committee to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD260.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with you today.

Peter Yanz, St. George, Maine