

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Grace Leavitt. I live in Raymond. I am a recently retired educator after over 43 years in the classroom. I am speaking in support of LD 260, the Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish that All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law.

As a teacher, I always endeavored to treat each of the students with whom I worked fairly. As a parent, I have always endeavored to treat my children fairly, and do so even now that they are adults. This is how I grew up, how I was raised by my parents. It is a basic principle that I have tried to live by, no matter who I may be working with or talking with, and I will continue to do so.

As I look back over the seven decades of my life thus far, progress has been made in lessening the incidence of some kinds of discrimination. Yet I am often dismayed at how that progress is much less than it should be, than it could be. And especially as I consider events of the past few years, and also as I see what is happening today, it actually seems that we are regressing.

I simply do not understand how anyone can think that others should not be treated equally. I can not grasp why some people still feel that it is alright that some people are still experiencing discrimination of any kind.

I wish that an amendment such as what is proposed in this Resolution were not needed. I wish that discrimination of any kind did not exist. I wish that everyone, no matter their race, perceived race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical or mental disability, ancestry or national origin did not experience any sort of discrimination, ever. We are all members of the same race—the HUMAN race.

But wishes do not make it so. We all know the saying, "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride."

The Maine Human Rights Act, thankfully, does provide protection for Mainers. I am grateful that I live in Maine, that one of my daughters at least, that my grandchildren, live in Maine. But laws are subject to change—at times, perhaps, too readily.

I am worried about what happens, what will happen, as we are seeming to see each day now the extreme lack of care and consideration and compassion for others.

We need to do more. We can and must do more to help see that all, no matter who they are, have equal rights. This protection needs to be a part of our state constitution in Maine so that each and every individual in our beautiful state will know that going forward their rights are protected, that they have the tool necessary to help ensure they are treated fairly.

Thank you for your time and the hard work that you are doing.

I am glad to try to answer any questions.

Grace Leavitt
Raymond, ME