



Committee on Judiciary

**Re: LD 260 - RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to
Establish That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law**

March 4, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Committee on Judiciary, my name is Heide Lester, and I am the Deputy Director of EqualityMaine, which has been advocating on behalf of Maine's LGBTQ+ community since 1984. I am testifying on behalf of EqualityMaine and our colleagues at MaineTransNet, whose mission is to support and empower transgender people to create a world where they can thrive. We are strongly in favor of the amendment to the Maine Constitution ensuring equality on the basis of the protected classes in the Maine Human Rights Act and urge you to support LD 260.

The LGBTQ+ community is not a monolith, and we recognize that many people experience discrimination based not only on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression but also in many cases as a result of their race, disability, ethnicity, religion, and country of origin. We live intersectional lives, and our freedoms and rights must reflect this. A comprehensive and inclusive equal rights act, should it pass the Legislature and be ratified, would protect our community members based on a full range of their historically marginalized and excluded identities.

We urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 260 in order to ensure that even if state statutes or laws change, equal rights for all are still protected in Maine's Constitution. Enshrining our commitment to equal justice under law in our most foundational document will continue Maine's tradition of protecting all people, including the most vulnerable, from the harmful effects of discrimination.

Thank you,

Heide Lester (they/them)
Deputy Director, EqualityMaine

Bre Danvers-Kidman (they/them)
Executive Co-Director, MaineTransNet