

[Southern Maine for Racial Justice](#)

York County

## Testimony in support of LD 260 to the Committee On Judiciary

March 4, 2025

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

We are the members of Southern Maine for Racial Justice, an advocacy group based in York County organizing for racial and economic equity. We are writing in support of LD260, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law.

In a time when we see laws protecting all individual's rights being changed and removed, it is critical to protect these rights in Maine's Constitution. This bill provides equal protections for all Mainers without exception.

We are all in pain from the recent abuse of a Maine student athlete being discriminated against on national news. Poverty and health care inequities are also a result of discrimination. There is overwhelming data showing the gender and racial inequities in Maine. The Maine Morning Star reports that one in three cases the Maine Human Rights Commission investigates are related to sex discrimination or sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination, or both. "[Women in Maine are more likely than men to experience poverty](#) regardless of employment status, the Maine Permanent Commission on the Status of Women concluded in its [2024 biennial report](#). Maine's Black populations have the highest poverty rates in the state, followed closely by American Indian or Alaska Native populations. Research [shows](#) the four federally recognized Wabanaki tribes in Maine — the Penobscot Nation, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Mi'kmaq Nation, and Passamaquoddy Tribes of Motaikmikuk and Sipayik — lag behind the rest of the state's citizens in a variety of key socioeconomic indicators. "

These findings show the unacceptable fact that people impacted by discrimination are generally impacted by multiple forms of discrimination at the same time. How can we accept this for our fellow Mainers?

LD260 shows that Maine values and protects all people. Solidifying this in our Constitution would safeguard these protections regardless of changes in local, state or federal politics. LD260 provides new tools needed to make progress in repairing socioeconomic inequities, prevent discrimination, and fight both in areas not clearly stated in current laws.

Fundamental equal rights embedded in Maine's Constitution shows that we care about addressing systemic racism and discrimination. We care equally for all Mainers.

We urge you to support this bill.

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<https://mainemorningstar.com/2024/12/12/commission-recommends-more-caregiving-support-to-address-maines-persistent-gender-disparities/>