

Lisa Lane
New England Women's Solidarity
LD 260

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

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Lisa Lane and I am a resident of Maine. I am here on behalf of New England Women's Solidarity, to oppose LD 260.

We are a feminist organization, and so our primary concern is the rights of women and girls. We believe that LD 260 is a threat to those rights here in Maine.

Of course we want everyone in our state to have equal rights to things like employment, housing, and education and we understand why a bill called the "Inclusive Equal Rights Amendment" sounds progressive. Upon closer examination, however, we believe that this bill would result in a regression of women's rights.

Including 'gender expression' and 'gender identity' as protected categories in the Maine Constitution would undermine women's ability to defend our rights as a sex-based class.

National polls have repeatedly shown that voters, including most Democrats, oppose biological males being allowed to compete in women's sports and being housed in spaces like women's prisons and crisis shelters.

We believe that most Mainers would reject this change to our state constitution if told that making gender identity a legally protected characteristic meant that female inmates had to accept sharing cells and showers with any male convict who claimed to identify as a woman, or that female athletes had to accept losing honors and opportunities to people with all the physical advantages that come with male anatomy.

Are you prepared to tell Maine schoolgirls that they have no choice about undressing in their gym class locker rooms beside their male peers because the Maine Constitution calls it discrimination for them not to accept someone's stated identity?

"Inclusion" should not mean the loss of women's and girls' rights to fairness, dignity and safety.

I appreciate the opportunity to share our point of view with the Committee. New England Women's Solidarity urges you to vote "NO" on LD 260. Thank you.