



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

My name is Anghy Tehuitzil, and I am a resident of Augusta, Maine and I work as the Base Building Coordinator at Maine Youth Power, a youth-led youth movement building power to win human dignity, equity, access and a livable future across rural and suburban Maine. I am here today on behalf of my organization to ask that you support LD260: Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish That All Maine Residents Have Equal Rights Under the Law.

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) would amend the Maine Constitution to protect people from discrimination based on their identities—whether based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic—an issue of great concern to many young people.

In a recent monthly meeting with our youth base, we held open conversations about how we are all navigating during these challenging times with our new federal administration. Young Mainers, similar to others around the country, expressed their deep concern that we are entering an era of extreme fascist tension, where people of all identities are experiencing fear.

Many Mainers, including myself, have faced discrimination. While Maine has taken significant steps to combat discrimination, it cannot erase its rooted history of white nationalism, genocide, and systemic racism, nor ignore current ongoing social injustices today. From the past and current unjust treatment of Indigenous tribes in Maine. People of color not always feeling safe such as the presence of Confederate flags in their neighborhoods, or people of color disproportionately affected by discrimination in Maine's housing, education, and the criminal justice system. And now with current threats to Maine's transgender policies, along with so much more issues that persist.

Maine's population within recent years is growing increasingly diverse, and many young people want to stay and be part of building a safe, livable future for themselves, their future families, and their communities. It is time for Maine to lead by example, implement stronger protections and take responsibility for these realities and support efforts like LD 260, which seek to dismantle white supremacy, systemic racism, and patriarchal systems of oppression.

Once again, I urge you to support LD 260.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Anghy Tehuitzil

