

Kharma Amos
Lisbon/Brunswick
LD 1432

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

I am the Rev. Dr. Kharma Amos, I use she/her pronouns, I am a resident of Lisbon, and I serve as the Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick.

I am submitting written testimony in vehement opposition to all of the anti-trans bills before this committee.

As it regards the bill that would amend the Maine Human Rights Act to remove gender identity from discrimination practices, let me begin by saying we should all be alarmed anytime there is a push to remove rights or protections on the basis of someone's identity. This bill clearly intends to permit, and perhaps even to encourage, discrimination against trans and non-binary people. At the very least, passing this bill would send a message to every trans and non-binary person (as well as the families, friends, and communities who love them) that they are exempted from so-called "human" rights. That's not right. There is nothing about a human being that should disqualify them from human rights, period.

As a Unitarian Universalist, the values of my spiritual tradition are centered in Love, and not one thing about this bill is loving. Along with our Jewish and Christian friends, Unitarian Universalists are taught to love all of our neighbors and to work for a world characterized by justice and equity. UUs first principle is to honor the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and we take it seriously. Trans rights are human rights, and every single trans or nonbinary person deserves respect as much as anyone else.

This proposed change to Maine's Human Rights Act will make it legal to actively discriminate against trans and non-binary people in employment, housing, public accommodation, and/or credit and educational opportunities. If you pass this bill, you are saying that trans and non-binary people do not deserve (and I quote this from the Maine Human Rights Act itself) "the basic human right to a life with dignity" that this act protects. It would be a shameful misuse of power and influence to give this hateful bill any more consideration.

Please, for the love of all that is good and holy, vote NO to this Bill, and continue to protect all of the people of Maine from unfair discrimination.