

Alex Wu
Scarborough, the League of Women Voters
LD 1412

My name is Alex Wu. I am a resident of Scarborough and a member of the League of Women Voters Youth Council. My position on this resolution is not indicative of the opinion of the League of Women Voters and is purely my own. I am testifying in affirmation of LD 1412

The League of Women Voters of Maine is a nonpartisan political organization that has been working for over 100 years to encourage informed and active participation in government, to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and to influence public policy through education and advocacy. We never support or oppose any political party or candidate.

As a chinese-american non binary student I understand the importance of protection under the law. It is something that I often think about because of the history of oppression within the legal system.

Especially regarding my right to vote, it is only after the Immigration and Nationality acts of 1952 & 1965 that I am able to vote as an asian-american. It was only 70 years ago coinciding with the civil rights movement that many minority groups properly became enfranchised, so the fight for equality in minority groups is recent and as such the legal precedence we set now will pave the way for a better protection, a better future for minority groups under the law.

In the past, especially black voters were prevented from voting even under a constitutional amendment due to things such as jim crow laws, literacy tests, and the grandfather clause even nullifying the existence of the amendment in the first place. If even a constitutional amendment in that time was not enough to protect black people from being able to vote, then it is certainly a possibility that a law today would not be enough to effectively protect minority groups. This is not to say that an amendment would not be effective at protecting minorities in the Maine constitution, but rather that law can be circumvented without the necessary support to enforce those laws. Today we have the support of those minority groups to enforce those laws, and with those groups' public support all we need to do is make the amendment.

If our rights ever become legally abridged, if they are violated federally, we can still be protected under our state law. If we do not constitute rights for our people, our constituents, we allow minority rights to be taken easily. If it comes to that and we have the proper amendment to protect our peoples, minority groups will be safe, but if we do not, if minority groups are forced yet again to fight for their own rights that fight for liberty will not come with safety.

Just because we currently have safety under the law does not mean that we will always have that safety. We need to understand the fact that it is a possibility, an inherent risk, that minority groups may yet again be oppressed. We have a fundamental right to safety against that oppression.

Please vote in favor of this resolution, and in favor of that oppression never happening again.