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## **LD 1025 An Act to Prohibit the Provision of Conversion Therapy to Minors by Certain Licensed Professionals**

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services:

My name is Deborah Crump and I am here on behalf of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network, which strongly supports passage of LD 1025-An Act to Prohibit the Provision of Conversion Therapy to Minors by Certain Licensed Professionals.

Our Unitarian Universalist faith affirms and promotes seven principles, which express our values and serve as moral guides. I am grounding my remarks today in the first two of these principles: 1) the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and 2) justice, equity and compassion in human relations. I believe, as do all major health and mental health associations in the US, that being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer are normal variants of human sexuality and gender identity. No young person should ever be shamed into thinking that who they are is wrong. Studies have shown that young people who have been subjected to conversion therapy, which often employs harmful and abusive techniques, are at increased risk for depression, feelings of guilt, helplessness, hopelessness, shame, social withdrawal, substance abuse, and suicide

My faith calls me to stand with and speak on behalf of the most vulnerable among us and to remind us of the challenges faced by those who are seeking to examine or understand their sexual orientation or gender identity. Their road is hard enough without being told they are not whole and worthy just as they are. I urge the passage of LD 1025 which would protect minors from being forced or coerced into undergoing conversion therapy and send a clear message that their lives are sacred, that they are not broken or in need of change. With passage of this bill, Maine would join the 17 other states and many municipalities that have passed similar legislation in the promotion of the public health, safety, and well-being of our youth. Thank you.

Deborah Crump