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My name is (the Rev. Dr.) Jodi Cohen Hayashida. I have served as the minister of the First Universalist Church, Unitarian Universalist of Auburn for the past 9 years and am also a resident of Auburn. I offer this testimony in full support of LD 1020.

As a Unitarian Universalist, my faith speaks of the inherent worth and dignity of every person. It teaches that we must look beyond the superficialities that divide us to the profound truth that unites us- we are all fragments of the holy, precious beyond measure. My faith also teaches that we are called to work towards the creation of a society that rests upon the firm foundation of justice, compassion, and equity. Such a society has no room for legal discrimination. I have in my congregation a couple that has been together for many, many years longer than I have been married to my husband. Their love for one another is no less deep than the love my husband and I share. Their commitment to each other is as profound. They challenge one another, support one another, care for one another through the best and worst of times. My faith teaches me that their love is no less sacred than my own. 6 years ago, my husband and I married. The moment we submitted our marriage license, we were granted over a thousand legal rights- rights that protected us then and now extend to protect and care for our two children. But this couple in my church- whose love is as deep, whose commitment is as profound- they can pay thousands of dollars for a few of the legal rights I get for free. But no matter how much money they spend, they will never have them all,

not as long as they are denied the right to legal marriage.

Part of this nation's greatness today is that it declares that here, in this country, there are no second-class citizens. That is a breathtaking principle. But it is not yet one that we embody. As long as we deny equal access to the legal rights and protections offered by civil marriage, we will continue to be an imbalanced and unjust society. We will refute with our actions the truth of those words. Civil marriage is a civil right. I ask you as a member of the clergy and as a citizen of this state- please support LD 1020.

Thank you.