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My name is the Rev. Kit Wang. I am an Episcopal priest at St. Stephen the Martyr Church in Waterboro, Maine, and my family and I live in York, Maine. I am writing in support of LD 1020 and I support the State of Maine extending the legal rights of civil marriage to same sex couples.

As a person of faith and leadership in a faith community, I feel called to support this legislation for several reasons.

In 2006, the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church—the body of Bishops, Priests, and Lay people that governs the denomination—resolved to reaffirm The Episcopal Church’s historical support of gay and lesbian persons as children of God and entitled to full civil rights; and called upon municipal council, state legislatures and the United States Congress to approve measures giving gay and lesbian couples protection[s] such as: bereavement and family leave policies; health benefits; pension benefits; real-estate transfer tax benefits; and commitments to mutual support enjoyed by non-gay married couples as well as opposing any state or federal constitutional amendment that prohibits same-sex civil marriage or civil unions.

In a nutshell, The Episcopal Church supports civil marriage equality for gay and lesbian people. As an Episcopal priest with a significant number of gay and lesbian young adults in my congregation, I am anxious for them to have the same civil rights and protections that their heterosexual brothers and sisters have.

On a more personal note, when my family moved to Maine, we gave up the safety and protections of being married in Massachusetts. Frankly, I would have preferred to have put the thousands of dollars we have spent in legal fees for our son’s second parent adoption, and the other legal documents necessary to protect us as a family into our son’s college fund. If we had been able to be married when our son was born, a significant number of these costs would not have been necessary. I will sleep more easily when my family is protected in the same way that those of my married neighbors are. In June, my partner and I will celebrate 19 years together, and 5 years of marriage. We would like to have that marriage be valid here in Maine.

This nation is a democracy, and so, this state is also. It is incumbent upon the majority, and those in positions in power to act to protect and defend those who are in the minority and who have less power. Marriage is a venerable institution which has served many roles over time, but today, its primary role is to provide structure and protection for the partners in a marriage, and especially for the children of a marriage if there are any. As a Christian, my role is to care for my neighbor—particularly those who are weaker or less well off than I. Civil marriage in Maine serves to protect and strengthen Maine families. It’s time that it protected ALL of Maine families.