



REV. STEPHEN CARNAHAN
Pastor

The Open House
A United Church of Christ
www.openhousechurch.org

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Members of the Maine State Legislature.

My name is Stephen Carnahan. I have been a pastor in the United Church of Christ for 25 years, and am currently serving The Open House, A United Church of Christ, in Portland, Maine. I also live in Portland, and have for 10 years.

This is in support of LD 1020. I am STRONGLY in favor of extending marriage rights to same sex couples.

I feel this issue is important both because I am a Christian, and because I am an American.

As a Christian, I recognize that God calls all people to form loving, committed relationships and families. Love and family are gifts from God, and I see no reason that this should be excluded to gay, lesbian, or transgendered persons. As do most Christians, I believe in the authority of the Bible. I take it seriously when it calls us to practice justice for everyone, not just those like us. I take the Bible seriously when it tells us to set aside our prejudices and welcome our neighbors no matter who they may be. I believe Jesus was serious when he told us that if we obey the laws to love God and love others, that we have fulfilled all God's requirements. I cannot accept that we can exclude people because they are who God made them to be. The Bible calls me to love my GLBTQ neighbors, and to work for justice for them.

As an American I believe that it is essential that we extend equality to all of our citizens in all ways. This is the essential, bedrock belief for me as an American, that all our people are to be equal under the law. This is even stated in a religious way in our Declaration of Independence, that this equality is God-given. We have not always lived up to this creed, as we can easily see when we look at our history. But we can also see that we have always moved to correct our society when we have seen that we are not all equal.

As a Christian and as an American I support this bill. As one proud to be a Mainer, where the sun rises first, and where We Lead, I encourage you to support this bill.