

Statement of Remigiusz Paluszak, RN, FNP, to the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

May 1, 2023

LD 1619 Ought to Pass

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the joint standing committee on Judiciary, thank you for acknowledging my testimony. My name is Remigiusz Paluszak, I live in Bangor and I am writing to testify in favor of LD 1619, "An Act to Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws." I have been working as a healthcare provider since 2006 and am currently a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP). Additionally, I am a father who, together with my then-pregnant partner, elected to terminate an unintended pregnancy she was then carrying. Within the context of our lives, this was the most appropriate medical and family course of action for us - it was one we made with information and support given to us by qualified providers, just as we would with any other health decision.

As a FNP and a parent, I urge you to support LD 1619 in order to ensure abortion remains accessible and safe as part of a range of healthcare options in Maine. As a healthcare provider, I am certain that my job is not to control someone else's reproductive organs and journeys, but to make sure that they are informed and supported in the decisions they make for themselves and their families. I follow peer-reviewed studies and know the calls for more in-depth research on the impacts of unintended pregnancies on maternal, child, and family care, as well as on the healthcare system. Despite such scholarship continuing to develop, there is evidence, including from meta-analyses, that mental, social and economic well-being are negatively impacted. I believe your responsibility, as legislative members, is to protect and expand the right and access to compassionate and credible healthcare, including abortion, which, in turn, may also lead to improved health outcomes for parents, families, and communities.

I believe my family's experience also speaks to this. When we made a decision for my partner to have an abortion, we were already the working parents of two young children. Like many young families, we were really just starting to "get on our feet" and build stability after years of pursuing education and multiple relocations. Given that my partner was on a long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC), the pregnancy was entirely unexpected and unintended; it was also something we didn't confirm until several months into gestation. What I want to emphasize is that the decision to terminate this pregnancy came from loving parents and out of care for our two children and the lives we were working to build for them in Maine. For us, having an abortion was/is choosing a family and ensuring our well-being.

Passing LD 1619 will support those who need to access abortion as part of their healthcare. It will guarantee that health decisions are made with the appropriate medical guidance and considerations that include the larger and more long-term impacts. Thank you for your time and consideration.