

May 1st, 2023
Bill LD1619
Written Testimony
Taylor Sharrow PT, DPT

Honorable Chair and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Taylor Sharrow and I am a resident of Dover-Foxcroft, Maine. I am a licensed physical therapist and have practiced solely in pediatrics since my graduation in 2018. I have had the privilege of experience in the settings of the neonatal intensive care unit, outpatient, and within several of our Maine school districts. I am testifying today in opposition of LD1619.

My occupation allows me the opportunity to work with children of varying ability levels. From children dependent on lifts and caregivers for daily function, children who utilize wheelchairs and walkers for mobility, to children who play recreational sports and hike mountains. All of these children have made a lasting impact on myself, their peers, and their families. Their worth is not dependent on their ability to be independent in mobility or cognition. Although many, if not most of them, grow up to have independence or modified independence within many domains of their life.

I have heard countless times mothers recount that when they were pregnant or after their child was recently born that a doctor had told them their child would never speak, or walk, or have meaningful relationships, etc. More often times than not, in my experience, children overcome and develop far past that which they were originally predicted. Children are resilient.

One of the most joyous populations to work with are those with Down syndrome. They light up rooms, greet those around them with warmth, play, communicate, and progress. My world would be dimmer without my patients who have Down syndrome. Yet, in the United States it is estimated that 60-90% of children diagnosed with Down syndrome are aborted, in comparison to 18% of all pregnancies ending in abortion (Senate.gov.) Why? I have to tell myself that it is because most people haven't been given the opportunity and rare joy it is to be in relationship with someone who has Down syndrome.

Regardless of a diagnosis or predicted outcome, children are precious gifts and it is our jobs as adults to protect them and steward their gifts and abilities well. It is not our job to be partial, to categorize, doubt, or view them as inconveniences. They all have something to offer if we only have eyes to see it.

We have an opportunity in our state to be pioneering our nation not towards death and destruction but towards a direction of restoration and reconciliation. By providing more effort, resources, and support to organizations like Safe Families, The Shepards Godparent Home, and The Forgotten Initiative who lovingly come along side mothers, children, and families in crisis. As well as providing more support for our state case workers, social workers, and foster families, instead of pouring time effort and resources into abortion.

Ultimately, it is not our place to play God but to fall under his rule which is clear on the position of abortion. Under his just provision is peace, protection, and grace for all.

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. Psalm 139: 13-14

I appreciate your time and diligence in reading testimonies in which may not align with your original positions.

My Very Best,

Taylor M. Sharrow PT, DPT
Taylor Sharrow PT, DPT
4/30/23