

May 1, 2023

Senator Carney and Representative Moonen, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Maureen Rispoli and I am a resident of Palermo. I am writing to testify in opposition to LD 1619. I am a teacher who is bound to administer standardized testing to her students today, in a time of substitute teacher shortages, and so I cannot be there to testify in person. My heart and spirit, however, are there.

This proposed change to the current abortion access laws is completely unnecessary and abhorrent in its scope. I am the mother of a daughter who was born prematurely at 35 weeks. I needed to have a C-section to deliver her because it was deemed that awaiting natural birth at term would have endangered both my life and hers. She was a preemie who did not need any artificial means to keep her alive. Today she is a healthy, beautiful and smart teenager who will soon be deciding her path after high school, hopefully to remain in our beautiful state. My baby was viable five weeks before term without the need for artificial life supports. Current Maine law establishes a time frame for viability, but this current bill proposes to remove any standard of viability entirely and make it legal to take the LIFE of a baby before birth, right up to the moment of birth. This is extreme and would give Maine the distinction of being among 8 radical states in our nation that allow the termination of a pregnancy up to the moment of birth. This is a not a distinction of which most Mainers would be proud, and it certainly is not “progress.”

Expanding abortion is not progress, nor is it healthcare. Is not the goal of healthcare to preserve life? In the case of abortion, there is more than one life to consider as the developing baby is most definitely a human life. As for the other life, that of the mother, current Maine law already allows for exceptions to the fetal viability standard when her life is in danger. On what grounds does this need expansion?

Please oppose this extreme bill, a bill that is unnecessary considering the law as it already stands in Maine. Mainers have the distinction of being reasonable, salt-of-the-earth people, do we not? Please take the only reasonable course of action in considering this bill, which is to oppose it.

Respectfully,

Maureen A. Rispoli

Palermo