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Testimony of the Maine Osteopathic Association
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

In Reference to

LD 1619 An Act to Improve Maine’s Reproductive Privacy Laws
Public Hearing: Monday, May 1, 2023 12:00 PM, State House, Room 438

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the joint standing committee on Judiciary, thank you for hearing my testimony.

My name is Dr. Julia McDonald, DO, MPH and I am double board certified by the American Academy of Family Medicine and the American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians. I teach at the Maine Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency and serve both as Clinical Associate Professor at the Dartmouth Geisel School of Medicine (NH) and as affiliate faculty at University of New England’s College of Osteopathic Medicine. As an active member of the Maine Osteopathic Association, I am providing written testimony on behalf of my physician colleagues in support of LD1619.

The Maine Osteopathic Association is a professional organization representing approximately 400 osteopathic physicians and an additional 700 residents and students. Our mission is to “serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy and member services in order to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State.

We have watched with horror the erosion of patient and physician rights around the United States as evidence-based medicine is called into question by political efforts to restrict healthcare, including abortion and other pregnancy related care. Seeing colleagues and their communities grapple with the threat of criminalization for providing evidence-based medicine is chilling and bodes poorly for patient outcomes, threatening the health of this nation’s families and communities. We commend Governor Mills, Senate President Jackson, and House Leader Talbot Ross for their leadership on this legislation which looks to safeguard Mainers and health care providers.

LD 1619 makes three important changes to our Reproductive Privacy Act:

- It places decisions around pregnancy where they belong: between the pregnant person and their doctor.
- It also would also provide a safety shield for people who support patients getting abortion care by removing criminal penalties for the trained clinicians who provide abortion care and also for anyone who helps someone access care, including self-managing their abortion care, in Maine.
- Finally, this bill removes antiquated and invasive data collection requirements for abortion patients and providers.

Within our field, there is a diversity of personal opinions about many medical interventions, but our physicians can agree that medical decisions are best made by trained health care professionals confidentially and privately with our patients. Our patients put their trust in us to use our best judgment to offer them medically accurate information and high-quality medical care. Mainers value their reproductive rights and freedoms, and this bill will ensure no one is denied the freedom to make these very private medical decisions.

It is for these reasons the MOA supports LD 1619 and recommends that you vote Ought to Pass.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at info@mainedo.org if you have any questions. Thank you.