

John Lewis  
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LD 1619

Dear Respective Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am submitting testimony today on LD 1619: An Act to Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws. In 1993, under Republican Governor John McKernan, Maine's current abortion law was enacted as a "trigger" should Roe v Wade be overturned. The current law allows the termination of pregnancy for ANY reason up until the point of viability. Viability is defined as the ability of the baby to survive outside of the womb naturally or with life-preserving technology. Beyond viability a pregnancy may be terminated to preserve the life or health of the mother.

LD 1619, if enacted, will position Maine as the most extreme in the country when it comes to allowing abortion. This is not where the Maine people are at. Mainers are not extreme, whether that's to the right or to the left. The majority of Maine people are in the middle. Maine's current abortion law represents the middle.

During the 2022 campaign season Governor Mills, and many Democrat candidates running for office, claimed their support of Maine's current abortion law, vowing NOT to change it. In fact it was Governor Mills and the Democrats that accused Republican candidates as wanting to change the abortion law if they were to be elected to office. In only a matter of days after the Governor's inauguration for her second term, was what we now know as LD 1619 proposed. If we cannot trust the Governor on her word, how can we trust her supposed good intentions with this bill?

The governor cites the example of a Yarmouth mother who, after receiving the tragic news that her baby was diagnosed with a deadly form of skeletal dysplasia, travelled out of state for an abortion as the reason why Maine's current abortion law must be expanded. While deep sympathy and compassion towards the mother is justified and with merit, the current law would have allowed her to seek an abortion here in Maine. Her baby would not have met the definition of viable. Unfortunately, this mother is being exploited for an agenda.

LD 1619 removes the restriction "to preserve the life or health of the mother" and replaces it with "in the professional judgement of a physician" beyond the point of viability. This change allows for on-demand, late-term abortions. What happened to safe, legal, and rare? We would be naïve if we ignore the potential abuse of this proposed language. In recent history we witnessed medical professionals allowing their political ideology to impact the care they provide their patients by defying their legal and ethical obligation to informed consent. If LD 1619 were to pass, a mother would be able to "shop" for physicians that agree with their ideology and choice to terminate a pregnancy in the hours before birth.

As a reminder, the vast majority of Mainers oppose on-demand, late-term abortions. Whether you personally agree or disagree with abortion, the Maine people support the current law as written. I am imploring you to make the more humane choice. Please vote Ought Not To Pass.

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