

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary:

My name is Anne Gass and I'm writing in support of LD 1619, An Act to Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws.

I support new proposed language regarding collecting data on abortions performed, stripped of any identifying information.

I also strongly support the language change to eliminate "to preserve the life or health of the mother," and to instead add the proposed language when it is necessary "in the professional judgment of a physician 21 licensed pursuant to Title 32, chapter 36 or 48." What we've seen in states that have enacted strict abortion regulations is that the phrase "to preserve the life or health of the mother" is far too vague. For example, does a woman have to have a 30% chance of death or disability in order to qualify for an abortion, or must she be actually dying (in an ICU, with her systems shutting down?) That's a wide range. The lack of clarity makes physicians and hospitals nervous, and as a result a procedure that in most cases is straightforward and safe becomes far more complicated and leads to greater health risks for women.

The state should not insert itself between women and their health care providers regarding their decision whether or not to terminate a pregnancy.

Please support the sensible language proposed under LD 1619.