

In Support of LD1619

Senator Carney, Representative Moonan and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Kimberly Simmons, from Portland Maine. I am submitting testimony today both as a mother of young adult daughters and a feminist sociologist. I am testifying in support of LD 1619.

As a woman who has experienced pregnancy, miscarriage and two live births, I'm horrified at the new spate of laws attempting to restrict reproductive health care at every stage of family planning.

Years ago, a person I know who prefers to remain anonymous received news that her very wanted pregnancy was endangered. The fetus was found to be missing several organs and could not survive outside of her womb. The hospital where this was diagnosed refused to treat her. In shock and despair, she was forced to find a hospital that would terminate the pregnancy. The alternative - carrying a dying fetus for many more months, would have endangered her health (she experienced pregnancy-related diabetes) and her capacity to care for her existing toddler. The stigma surrounding the experience makes it difficult to discuss, which is also hard — we know that many who publicly oppose full reproductive freedoms for everyone privately select abortion care when they need it. Not being able to discuss abortions later in pregnancy stifles healing and needed care.

I deeply appreciate LD 1619 and the clear message it sends. Pregnant people's health matters. Pregnancy is not a moral state, it is a physical one, and pregnant people deserve access to all forms of health care that are currently available. We can trust (and should insist) doctors and midwives to maintain up to date standards of care and work with pregnant people needing interventions at any state of their pregnancy or deliveries. Health care providers should not be harassed, medical facilities should be safe, and individuals seeking health care should have their privacy and well-being respected by others. Period. Governor Mills, Speaker Talbot Ross and the other co-signers of this legislation recognize that these core values are being threatened by a small number of extreme voices. Articulating these values in State law helps us all know that differing opinions are fine but acts of harassment, intimidation and threats of violence are not.

Thank you,

Kimberly C Simmons
Portland, ME