

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Jill Tabbutt-Henry, and I live in Portland. I'm here today to testify in support of LD 1343 and 1619.

I am in my late-60's, so--like all women of my generation in the U.S.--I remember the time before Roe v. Wade when abortion was illegal, hard to access or afford, and often unsafe when you could find access.

I grew up in Maine and I had older friends before the Roe decision who had to travel to one of the states that allowed abortions. Sometimes they had to create a false resident status. Usually they had to wait until much later in their pregnancy for the procedure--with additional medical risks. They had to find the money to cover the cost of the procedure and everything else that was required. And, equally challenging and stressful, they had to somehow keep it all secret from key people in their lives.

I was luckier. When I got pregnant in 1975--single, dropping out of college, just starting to work, and not able to raise a child on my own--I was living in a state with excellent women's health services. Since abortion was legal, I easily found a clinic that provided abortions. I made an appointment, and I was able to have the procedure early in my pregnancy--because I wasn't forced to delay care as a result of unnecessary obstacles. That meant that it was both less expensive and much safer than what my friends had experienced before Roe.

I am grateful that I had the choice, and the information, and the access to safe, affordable abortion services--and I believe everyone in this country should have the same. I decided to have an abortion, with hopes of one day being in a better position to welcome a child into the world. After my abortion, I went back to college and got a degree in Community Health Education, with a Master's degree in Public Health, and I have been working in reproductive health counseling for over 30 years, in Maine, the U.S., and developing countries. I gave birth to two beautiful, healthy babies who are now young adults. They are now struggling to make sense of our society's current conflict between individual liberty on the one hand and abortion restrictions on the other. I also struggle to understand how the right to make decisions that affect

my body, my life, could be made by anyone but me. As a mother, my struggle turns into fierce outrage when I try to understand how the right to make decisions about my children's bodies, and their own lives, could be made by anyone but them.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 1343 and 1619, and keep the right to make decisions about an individual's body where it belongs– with that individual. Thank you.