

Tiffany Clark
Skowhegan
LD 1619

Good afternoon, Senator, Representative, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Tiffany Clark. I am a resident of Skowhegan, and I am here to testify in opposition of LD 1619.

I am a registered nurse, certified lactation counselor, sexual risk avoidance educator, and mother of two. I began my career as a labor and delivery and postpartum mother/baby nurse in the birthing center of a local critical access hospital. I currently serve women facing unexpected pregnancies.

I believe that LD1619 is too extreme for Maine. Abortion at any time for any reason is unnecessary and inhumane. You have likely heard the pro-choice argument that abortion needs to be expanded up until nine months because of medical necessity. Current law in Maine already covers medical necessity, and I am here to tell you, as a healthcare professional that specializes in women's health and pregnancy, that there is never a medical indication for abortion in the third trimester. In the case that a woman or her pre-born child has a life-threatening condition, and continuation of pregnancy is inadvisable, the quickest and safest way to separate mom and baby is not by murder of the baby, but delivery of the baby. The dilation and evacuation process of third trimester abortions typically takes several days as the abortionist has to first dilate the woman's cervix, a timeframe not compatible with emergent help. In the case of a true medical emergency, at gestations later than viability (which is 23-24 weeks, though babies have survived as early as 21 weeks gestation), a cesarean can be performed to not only save the life of the mother, but ideally, also that of the child.

I am no stranger to difficult pregnancies. I experienced extreme, all day sickness, weight loss, perinatal mood disorders, and consequent health problems with each of my pregnancies. I had planned and hoped and still experienced intermittent regret regarding my choices. I feel immense empathy for women facing pregnancy unexpectedly. It's why I do what I do.

I am not here to oppose LD1619 because I do not want what's best for women and their children. I am here to oppose LD1619 because women deserve better than abortion and they deserve better than the risks that come with it. Risks of abortion increase with progression of gestation - the risk of death from septic abortion is one example - and expanding abortion access in Maine to the extent that it would be one of the most extreme laws in our entire nation - will increase the incidence of complications and worsen prognoses for women. It is not right for Maine. It is not right for women.

I urge you to vote "ought not to pass". Thank you.