
**Testimony of Regina Rooney on behalf of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence
In Opposition of LD 494: “An Act to Conform State Funding to the Federal Hyde
Amendment, Limiting Funding for Some Abortion Services”**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
May 5, 2023**

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, I am writing on behalf of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV)¹ in opposition to LD 494, “An Act to Conform State Funding to the Federal Hyde Amendment, Limiting Funding to Some Abortion Services.”

Four years ago, MCEDV supported the expansion of MaineCare coverage for abortion services because we have seen over and over again the important role that access to abortion can have on a survivor’s immediate and long-term safety, and because we believe that options to increase safety should not only be available to people who can afford to pay out of pocket or have access to private health insurance. We write in opposition to this bill for the same reasons.

People often think that safety planning must involve the police, the courts, or a shelter, but creating lives free from abuse is more complicated than that. A survivor’s ability to decide whether or not to have a child is a critical factor in their ability to manage both the risks posed by their abusive partner and their long-term economic security, which is what survivors cite most often as the barrier that keeps them trapped. Maine’s law providing for abortion coverage for people on MaineCare, which by design covers our state’s most economically vulnerable people, is therefore an important antidote to the tactics that abusive partners frequently use to coerce or force pregnancy². Removing this coverage limits the options for people who are already at an economic disadvantage when dealing with their partner’s abuse and plays into the hands of those who want to maintain control

¹ MCEDV serves a membership of eight regional domestic violence resource centers as well as the Immigrant Resource Center of Maine. Our member programs provided services to more than 12,000 victims of domestic violence in Maine last year, including court advocacy services in the civil and criminal courts.

² “Reproductive coercion” describes behaviors used by a person to exert control over their partner’s reproductive and sexual health in order to control that person. It can include tactics like sabotaging birth control, coercing a partner into unprotected sex by “stealthing” and other means, and preventing their partner for exercising reproductive choice. Learn more: mcedv.org/learn-about-abuse/reproductive-coercion/

over their partners by coercing or forcing pregnancy to create long-term legal connection and economic dependence.

For these reasons, MCEDV respectfully encourages you to vote against LD 494. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this perspective, and I welcome any questions you may have.

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