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**Testimony of Senator Jill Duson in Support of LD 1619, “An Act to Improve Maine’s
Reproductive Privacy Laws”
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
May 1, 2023**

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Distinguished Colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Jill Duson. I represent Senate District 27, which includes parts of Westbrook and Portland. I am here to speak in favor of LD 1619, “An Act to Improve Maine’s Reproductive Privacy Laws.”

Women’s health care is under threat. This legislation is critical to ensuring that women have access to the health care that they need, when they need it. There are so many risks that come with pregnancies that put the mother’s life in danger. By expanding access to abortion care, we are giving mothers the space and autonomy to make the decision that is right for them and their family. The only people in these situations who know what the best course of action is the mother and her doctor. This legislation would allow them to take the action needed for the specific medical crisis at hand.

Abortion is health care. Access to abortion services is access to health care services. Black women are disproportionately affected by lack of access to health care services, especially when it comes to abortion. This legislation would ensure that women of color in Maine have the fundamental right to bodily autonomy.

We are standing at a crucial moment in Maine’s history. This is the moment when we can choose freedom and rights over oppression.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.