



LD 1619: An Act to Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws

May 1, 2023

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee: my name is Gia Drew, and I am the executive director of EqualityMaine, which has been advocating on behalf of Maine's LGBTQ+ community since 1984. We are testifying with GLBTQ Legal Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) in support of LD 1619, An Act to Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws.

LGBTQ+ people are among those who become pregnant and need access to safe abortion care. Statistically, LGBTQ+ people are about twice as likely as their cisgender, heterosexual peers to have a teen pregnancy¹, significantly more likely to be the victims of sexual violence resulting in pregnancy², and more likely to have an abortion.³ Furthermore, the right to a safe abortion is a right to bodily autonomy, which is an integral part of our community's fight for equality. We believe unequivocally that any restrictions on people's bodily choices can deny them their ability to live with authenticity and dignity, or even to live at all.

Medical care providers understand that people in their care are individuals with unique needs, values, and circumstances. Informed consent guides professionals legally and ethically, making them highly qualified advisors for the choices people make pertaining to their health. The removal of legislative restrictions and penalties – which were implemented by those who are neither familiar with the practice of medicine nor with the individual seeking care – will appropriately transfer medical decisions to the patient and provider relationship.

¹ Charlton, Brittany M et al. "Teen Pregnancy Risk Factors Among Young Women of Diverse Sexual Orientations." *Pediatrics* vol. 141,4 (2018): e20172278.

² Jones, Rachel K et al. "Sexual Orientation and Exposure to Violence Among U.S. Patients Undergoing Abortion." *Obstetrics and gynecology* vol. 132,3 (2018): 605-611.

³ Charlton, Brittany M et al. "Sexual Orientation Differences in Pregnancy and Abortion Across the Lifecourse." *Women's health issues: official publication of the Jacobs Institute of Women's Health* vol. 30,2 (2020): 65-72.

The more that access to legal abortions is restricted, the higher the risks for those seeking abortion services becomes.⁴ Lastly, we respectfully ask that the bill's language be updated to be more inclusive by using "pregnant person" in place of "mother" and "their" in place of "her". Thank you for supporting safety and reproductive autonomy, and voting Ought To Pass on LD 1619.

Thank you,

Gia Drew (she/her)
Executive Director, EqualityMaine

GLBTQ Legal Advocates and Defenders (GLAD)

⁴ "Increasing Access to Abortion." American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2020/12/increasing-access-to-abortion>.