

Savanah Quirion  
Lewiston  
LD 1619

Savanah Quirion  
Lewiston, ME  
savanahq1997@gmail.com

Hello Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Savanah Quirion, I live in Lewiston, Maine and am a lifelong Mainer. I am here today to urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1343, An Act to Protect the Reproductive Freedom of Maine People, and LD 1619, An Act To Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Law.

These acts are not only about abortion but reproductive healthcare as a whole and how we are able to access it across the state of Maine.

During fall of last year, I left an abusive marriage. Through all the types of abuse, I endured, I want to highlight the effects of the sexual abuse and reproductive coercion I dealt with for almost five years and how having access to proper medical care, specifically reproductive healthcare, saved my life.

For those of you who don't know what reproductive coercion is, it is a type of abuse that involves behaviors that a person will use against their partner to maintain power and control over their reproductive health. Including behaviors such as pressure, manipulation, emotional blackmail, threats, and even physical violence.

After being on birth control for the first year of our relationship, I moved in with my then-boyfriend; this was an hour and a half from my home and my doctor. It was decided shortly after moving that I would go off of birth control, and we were going to start trying to have a child. During this time, the abuse I experienced increased in frequency and severity.

Eventually, I realized the caring and love-filled home I wanted to provide for a baby was no longer possible. However, there were a multitude of barriers I faced in trying to access reproductive healthcare. It wasn't safe for me to ask to go on birth control, and the risk of being found out to be secretly taking it was too much. I wasn't allowed to take a pregnancy or ovulation test by myself, and when I was found to have done so, I faced repercussions. For a long time, I lived in constant fear that I would be forced into a pregnancy I didn't want.

I ask you to please pause and think of how common this reality is in our state. With unfortunately 1 in 7 women in Maine experiencing contact sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner.

The fear of carrying a pregnancy continued until I reestablished at a new primary care provider's clinic that was multi-purpose, meaning here I was able to access reproductive healthcare and counseling.

Through the counseling of my new provider, we found a method of birth control I could receive in the office that same day that wouldn't be able to be tracked by my husband, this being the Depo shot. For those of you unfamiliar, you receive an injection every three months to manage medical conditions related to your menstrual cycle and prevent pregnancy.

Even with all the barriers I had, had I not had access to the reproductive healthcare I needed, I very likely would have been forced to carry a pregnancy and bring a child

into an unsafe home. Restricting any kind of access to reproductive healthcare is dangerous, especially for women already experiencing restrictions due to abuse.

Today, some will call me terrible names, saying I hate babies and am an evil person. To that I want to let you know that I worked in childcare for over eight years, and more recently worked in the foster care system with medically needy and special needs children. I want children of my own someday, either biologically, through fostering, or adopting. But I want to do it when the time is right and with the right partner who won't make me fear for my or my child's safety. Access to proper reproductive healthcare is essential in our state to protect women and children from being put in extreme and unsafe situations.

With this given testimony, I ask you to please vote Ought to Pass on LD 1343 and LD 1619, to protect the women and children of our state. Thank you for your time and consideration.