

## Testimony to the Judiciary Committee

RE: L.D. 1619, H.P. 1044

Greetings to the Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Fr. Aaron Damboise. I am a priest of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland and the pastor of the Parish of the Holy Savior in Mexico. I am also the State Chaplain for the Maine State Council of the Knights of Columbus. I am here to oppose the passage of L.D. 1619.

In my fifteen years of priestly ministry, I've encountered many different pastoral situations. Some of those have involved parents grieving the loss of a child. Included in that group are post-abortive parents. I counseled a mother who spent thirty years struggling with nightmares when she saw what she believed to be the face of her baby. I've counseled fathers who encouraged their girlfriends or wives to have an abortion, only to find themselves grieving and wondering what kind of person their child would have become. I've heard the stories of women who were forced to have an abortion as young adults by their fathers or boyfriends because the child would have been born out wedlock and the family didn't want other people to think that their daughter was "that kind of girl." These women, while possessing the freedom to procure an abortion, often didn't feel they had a choice and have spent a great part of their adult lives healing from the hurt and pain that this decision, made under great duress, has caused them.

Abortion has many victims, and the wounds it inflicts are deep and long-lasting. Increasing access to abortion during the later periods of pregnancy will only serve to expose more Maine women to potentially harmful and devastating situations. Because of this, I strongly urge the members of this committee to reject L.D. 1619.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Aaron Damboise, Pastor

Parish of the Holy Savior, Mexico, ME