

May 5, 2023

Senator Anne Carney, Representative Matt Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Cait Vaughan and I am a staff member with Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights (GRR!), an education and advocacy organization dedicated to advancing reproductive health, rights and justice for present and future generations. I'm testifying on behalf of GRR! in opposition to **LD 1197: An Act to Prevent Coerced Abortion.**

The assumption that medical providers are coercing patients to have abortions is insulting and absurd. Providers are already highly regulated and deeply aware of both their hippocratic oath and standards of care. Studies show pregnant folks are coerced by violent partners and parents, but not by the doctors trained to support their health. The bill "prohibits criminal threatening of any person, including if they refuse to have an abortion." The threatening behavior most commonly found at clinics that provide abortions are by protestors who are opposed to patients' legal right to receive care without harassment or interference. The implication that providers push abortions onto patients is legally, medically, and morally inaccurate.

The inclusion of a requirement of refunds for abortions not completed is bizarre and unnecessary. Abortion procedures are not billed until after the completion of the procedure. So, if a patient schedules and then cancels an appointment for an abortion, they are not charged for services not received. Also, when a patient arrives at their appointment and appears to be in conflict, a provider will offer to reschedule the appointment to allow for more consideration and refer the patient to additional confidential, unweighted and free counseling.

Coercion of pregnant people to have abortions is most often perpetrated by parents of minors and partners within an abusive dynamic. As you will no doubt hear in testimony by the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV), Maine's public abortion providers are in fact excellent resources for patients in unsafe relationships and already make strong referrals to social services and victim supports, in addition to maintaining robust professional partnerships and organizational connections with those agencies.

GRR!s want pregnant Mainers to feel supported and safe, and LD 1197 is stigmatizing providers of abortion care and meaningful referrals to critical resources. We urge the committee to oppose LD 1197.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Cait Vaughan & GRR!s across Maine