

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 1614: An Act to Require an Ultrasound and Certain Counseling Before an Abortion.**

Abortion care is built around facilitating agency and informed decision-making for patients. In current practice within publicly available abortion clinics in Maine, ultrasounds are given at the discretion of the provider, a licensed medical professional. Providers consult with patients before ultrasounds regarding what information they would like to have shared with them. This allows the patient to experience their medical care as self-determined and humane. Medical providers should be working in partnership with patients to determine what is medically necessary and best for that individual patient.

LD 1614 ignores the thoughtful protocols and practices currently in place, and injects anti-abortion ideology into patient decision-making. Research on mandated ultrasound viewing shows that viewing ultrasound images do not deter the majority of patients who were certain in their decision beforehand, and only impact the decision of those with prior low to medium certainty¹. This supports allowing patients to decide how much and which information they desire to know throughout this deeply personal process.

Solid research reveals the harms of mandatory waiting periods, and such barriers also go against World Health Organization recommendations for abortion care². This bill proposes changes to Maine's abortion laws that would negatively impact patients with regards to a time-sensitive and legal medical procedure. Once a pregnant person has decided to end their pregnancy, it is their legal right to do so under Maine law and they should not be subjected to additional barriers to obtain care.

GRR!s want pregnant Mainers to feel supported and safe, and LD 1614 instead proposes new barriers to basic health care. We urge the committee to oppose LD 1614.

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

¹ https://journals.lww.com/greenjournal/Abstract/2014/01000/Relationship_Between_Ultrasound_Viewing_and.13.aspx

² <https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-022-13620-z>