

Maine Atheist Freethinker and Humanist Association

Maine Chapter - Freedom from Religion Foundation

May 4, 2023

Re: LD 1197 An Act To Prevent Coerced Abortion

Members of the Committee on Judiciary, this is testimony AGAINST LD 1197.

Coercion is the act of pressuring someone to do something against their will. Coercion regarding abortion can take many forms. LD 1197 seems to suggest that most abortion coercion happens in abortion clinics. Studies show this not to be the case. Most coercion happens in homes or within relationships, and women who reported coercion were most likely to say that financial concerns or relationship pressure were factors.

There seems to be no evidence that abortion coercion is a prevalent issue within abortion clinics. In fact, professionals at these clinics have ethical and legal obligations to ensure that patients make informed decisions. LD 1197 therefore layers unnecessary and detailed legislation on top of an already delicate situation, and all that would accomplish is to leave opportunities for outside parties to push their own agenda into a situation already fraught with emotion.

To effectively address the issue of abortion coercion, it is necessary to focus on education and support for those in these situations and work toward an environment where individuals can make informed decisions, without fear of coercion, concerning their reproductive health. This proposed law does not do that.

Please vote ought not to pass on LD 1197.

Sincerely,

-Ray Vensel

Vice President, Maine Chapter Freedom from Religion Foundation