

Mary Pray
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LD 780

Senator Carney and Representative Moonen, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Mary Rose Pray and I am a resident of Brunswick. I am submitting written testimony in opposition to LD 780.

A recent study (Reardon DC, Rafferty KA, Longbons T (May 11, 2023) The Effects of Abortion Decision Rightness and Decision Type on Women's Satisfaction and Mental Health. *Cureus* 15(5): e3882.doi:10.7759/cureaus.3882) reports 70% of women experiencing abortion state the abortion decision was inconsistent with their own values and preferences, and one in four abortions are unwanted or coerced.

Abortion proponents contend that access to unrestricted abortion is central to a woman's ability to define and carry out her own life plan; that infringing upon this right has only negative impact on a woman. Yet the unrestricted access to abortion has empowered those who abuse women far more than empowering women themselves.

Abortions of the past took place primarily at an abortion facility where the patient was typically separated from any apparent support people, giving opportunity for the woman to provide uncoerced informed consent. There was some time and opportunity for the woman to stop the abortion if she was being forced or having second thoughts. Today, most abortion websites require no proof of pregnancy and some even offer a discount for buying abortion inducing drugs in bulk. Those seeking to abuse women and end their pregnancies have been emboldened.

Today's abortions take place in utter isolation, empowering abusers to have complete control over the pregnancy decision. In the U.S. domestic violence is a growing tragedy. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence reports that 20 people per-minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States, which equates to more than 10 million cases each year. One in three women report having experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner.

With 24% of women now reporting coercion or an unwanted abortion, this violence against women undoubtedly continues to increase. LD 780 does nothing to advance the cause of women's rights here in Maine. In fact, it will undermine them.