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LD 780

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary Committee, I am Jill Tabbutt-Henry. I live in Portland, and I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 780. I am very proud to live in a state that protects the individual's reproductive rights, including the right to decide whether or not to continue a pregnancy that was unplanned or poses medical risks to the person who is pregnant. I know, from personal experience, the difficulties of living in a time or place where those decision-making rights were not respected, nor protected. It makes an already traumatic situation even worse, adding to medical and other health risks.

I have also had a long career of training reproductive health care counseling in over 20 different countries around the world (including the U.S.). Regardless of the culture in which I was working, there was universal understanding and acceptance of the right of individuals and couples to make their own informed choices about whether and when to have children.

I am also aware that this basic human right is threatening to some people. I am not exactly clear why that is. I can't imagine that such people would want the government interfering with their personal health and health-care decisions, but they seem keen on imposing restrictions on reproductive autonomy for others. That means that Maine's current laws protecting reproductive autonomy could be changed again and again, per the whims of future legislatures.

Thus, we need a constitutional amendment to protect this fundamental human right. I would like all Mainers to have a chance to express their opinion on the right to reproductive autonomy, by voting on this proposed amendment to our state constitution. Please vote Ought to Pass on LD780 and give us that opportunity. Thank you.