

Karl Otterson  
South Paris  
LD 780

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary Committee, I'm Karl Otterson, I live in South Paris, and I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 780.

While I am not myself religious, I am quite sympathetic to the usual religious objections to abortion. It seems intuitive to me that we should do everything we can to help other human beings achieve their full potential. I chose to become a teacher for this very reason. Cutting short any life seems a waste, and the younger the life the more we feel this.

Nonetheless, on closer examination we are forced to abandon this line of thinking. We must balance our strong feelings of regret for missed potential against the right of individuals to determine what to do with their own bodies. The right to life must always yield to this more basic human right. If anyone on the committee doubts my ordering of these rights, consider: nobody can be forced to donate organs, or blood, or even merely their time, even when failing to do so will cost lives. While it may be morally praiseworthy to donate platelets, it is absolutely not morally obligatory. If anyone attempted to force this issue on us we would object most strenuously! Furthermore the law would absolutely be on our side. Even given that without those platelets, people will die, we cannot force anyone to give this of themselves. Now consider how small a thing it is to ask. An hour of your day on a table with a needle in each arm, and zero risk of mortality. But we do not force this on people. Ever. Why then do we feel free to do so to pregnant people? By what right can society force them to endure months of major bodily changes with a risk of death more comparable to kidney donation than blood donation? Our intuitions must yield to this argument: while we should do everything we can to protect all life, what we can do is circumscribed by what obligations it is morally permissible to put onto other people. The individual's right to self determination cannot and must not be curtailed by the state.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 780. Thank you.

Karl Otterson