

Cara Sammons-Shepard
New Gloucester
LD 780

January 22nd, 2024

Senator Anne Carney, Representative Matt Moonen, and esteemed members of the
Judiciary Committee,

My name is Cara Sammons-Shepard, DVM and I am a resident of New Gloucester,
Maine. I'm testifying in support of LD 780, RESOLUTION, Proposing an
Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive
Autonomy.

The task before legislators is to decide if the question about the change to our
constitution will be put before Maine voters in the November election; this is not
about their personal beliefs around abortion or birth control.

Decisions about reproductive health and the individual's right to choose what is the
best course of action for their personal health and well being are decisions that are for
individuals, their families, and their doctors to be involved with. Governmental
bodies have no place in regulating these decisions or actions.

Mainers have consistently supported expansion of rights and access to care and
rejected attempts to increase restrictions, including:

Passing our own Reproductive Privacy Act in the 1990s;

Refusing multiple proposals to require parental consent and notification for minors to
access abortion care;

Expanding insurance coverage—including MaineCare—for abortion services in 2019;

Expanding the types of clinicians who can legally provide abortion services to include
advanced practice clinicians, such as certified nurse midwives, physician assistants
and nurse practitioners;

Passing LD 1619 in 2023, which legalized abortion care past 24 weeks of gestation,
when deemed appropriate by a physician.

Abortion is essential health care and for no other medical procedure is access at risk
each election cycle and subject to the whims of politicians, rather than scientific
evidence and best medical practice;

Abortion is a fundamental right and warrants protection under our state constitution.

Therefore, I urge you to vote Ought To Pass on LD 780.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cara Sammons-Shepard, DVM
New Gloucester, Maine