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LD 780

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Jane Swenson. I'm from Portland and I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 780.

I support this bill because decisions about my body are between me and my doctor. This point became especially poignant to me in the spring of 2022 when I found myself pregnant. Happily married, financially stable and already a mother of two, from the outside, it would have been reasonable to assume a third child was in the plans. In fact, a third child had at one point been in "the plans" but my life, as everyone else's, rarely goes to plan.

In the spring of 2022 I was cracking from the stress of post-pandemic life with 2 young children, helping to take care of my aging parents who both were battling cancer, and supporting my sister who had recently come forward about the sexual abuse she has experienced as a child by my father's best friend. I share this not to elicit sympathy, my story is not unique, I share this particularly difficult snapshot from my life to explain why I could not have a baby. I knew what having a child entails, I knew that my family support system was not available to support me, I knew that I was crumbling from anxiety.

Who else knew I was going through a tough time? My husband, some of my closest friends and my doctor. And when I became pregnant, who knew? My husband, a few close friends and my doctor. So when I came to the conclusion that I could not have another child, I turned to my doctor. She knew me, she knew I was struggling already and when I told her I wanted to end my pregnancy, she talked me through my options without a hint of judgment. Isn't this what we all deserve? I still look at ending that pregnancy as one of the best decisions I made for myself and my family.

It can not stand that the reproductive freedom I experienced could be taken from future generations, and that the laws we currently have could be changed. Everyone should be able to make their own decisions about their reproductive healthcare and how, when, and if they decide to start or expand a family. A reproductive autonomy amendment would explicitly enshrine Mainers' rights to do that in the state constitution.

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