

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Kimberly Simmons, I am the mother of two young-adult daughters, submitting testimony in support of LD 780.

My perspective is deeply influenced by my grandfather, a devoted Republican who believed in abortion rights as a vital component of personal freedom. Although I identify as a Democrat, we found common ground in the shared values of civil liberties, freedom from government overreach, and the principles of individual responsibility. I believe these values are shared throughout our State. LD 780 offers us the opportunity to decide, as voters, if protection of abortion and other reproductive rights should be ensured for future generations. I urge you to send this bill to the people.

As highlighted in a Pew Research study, 50% of Maine Republicans fully support abortion rights, underscoring a shared belief in individual liberty across party lines (source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/religious-landscape-study/compare/views-about-abortion/by/party-affiliation/among/state/maine/>). However, the power and influence of a select few threaten to undermine these shared values. Constitutional protection safeguards against potential shifts in state law and also prevents an onslaught of expensive extremist campaigns.

As a mother, I understand the profound impact of pregnancy, birth, and child-raising on our lives. Forced pregnancy or birth is a form of torture. Consent for medical interventions in our lives is an essential human right. I hope that my daughters will someday return to Maine, and will feel safe and welcome here, to create whatever families they do. I ardently reject the notion that the State knows better than individuals about what's best for our bodies or our families, and if Maine voters have the opportunity to vote on a Constitutional Amendment I believe we will find we overwhelmingly agree.

I urge you to vote in favor of LD 780, ensuring that it moves forward for consideration by the people.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Simmons, PhD