

21 January 2024

Testimony in support of LD780 Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive Autonomy

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

My name is Cathleen Miller and I am a resident of Scarborough. I urge you to vote in support of LD780.

I was born just days before Roe v. Wade was decided in 1973. For my entire reproductive life, I had the comfort of knowing that I could choose whether to become a parent. I never imagined that I would live in a country where I did not have that right, yet that is the story that is unfolding all across our country right now. People are going to extraordinary lengths to receive life-saving abortion care. Women are being charged with crimes for miscarriages, a condition that affects so many people during their reproductive lives. The United States has suddenly become a terrifying place to become pregnant, even if that pregnancy is a wanted one.

For many of us, pregnancy happens when we are young and vulnerable and do not have the resources to care for a family. That is what happened to me. I was 19 and in my sophomore year of college. I had been dating a guy for a few months. I went on the pill, but not before I got pregnant in one of the only times we had unsafe sex. I was paying my way through college, working at a work-study job where I made \$2.90 per hour. I had less than \$20 in my bank account. I didn't want to become a parent, and my boyfriend said he would leave me if I had the baby. We were able (thanks to his credit card) to obtain an abortion at a clinic two hours from where we lived. It wasn't easy, but I knew it was the only choice for me. Because of that one decision, I was able to complete college, go to graduate school, and live the life that I have chosen. If I had been forced to become a parent, I would likely have been on food stamps and never able to complete my education. The opportunity to choose one's path to parenthood (or not) should be a decision left to individuals with advice and counsel from trusted people who understand their situations. Enshrining this right into the Maine constitution would protect this personal decision.

Please vote in favor of LD780 to protect the rights of all Mainers to define their reproductive choices for themselves without the interference of government. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

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277 Broadturn Road
Scarborough, ME 04074

Cathleen Miller
Scarborough
LD 780

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