

Jennifer Thibodeau
Portland
LD 780

January 22nd, 2024

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

My name is Jennifer Thibodeau and I am a Maine citizen, a person who's had an abortion, and I work with abortion care providers across the U.S. I'm testifying in support of LD 780, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive Autonomy.

I work for a nonprofit organization that supports abortion care providers across the United States, and through that work, I am afforded a glimpse into the devastating impacts of abortion bans. Fourteen states have banned abortion completely and another dozen have enacted extreme, unjust restrictions. As a result, people are suffering deeply: their lives, health, families, and future are under real threat.

Clinics and providers in states where abortion remains legal are literal lifelines for many thousands of people who live in states that deny their citizens the fundamental human right to abortion. As a proud Mainer – born and raised here – I am proud that my state is one in which we trust our citizens to make decisions about their lives, health, and families. With LD 780, the people of Maine have the opportunity to ensure that our state remains a welcoming, safe, and fair place for anyone seeking reproductive healthcare.

The World Health Organization recognizes abortion as essential healthcare and a fundamental human right, yet the ability to access that right depends on where a person lives and the resources they have available to them. Basic rights should not be up for debate every election cycle, and a person's ability to shape their future and family shouldn't hinge on laws that can be repealed by politicians who can't know what it's like to walk in their shoes. A reproductive autonomy amendment would ensure that the rights Mainers have today will be protected in the future.

Not only is it dangerous and unjust to deny people reproductive health care or to force them to travel for that care, it's also out of step with what most Americans want. A significant majority of people in the US believe abortion should be legal in most or all cases, believe that states make it "too hard" to get an abortion, and want clinics in their states.

While most Americans trust their neighbors to make their own decisions about pregnancy and abortion, reproductive rights are under constant political attack. A constitutional amendment would explicitly safeguard Mainers' rights to make their own personal, private medical decisions about when and how to create their families.

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

Thank you for your consideration,
Jennifer Thibodeau
Portland, ME