

January, 21. 2024

Re: Testimony in favor of LD 780 RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive Autonomy

Senator Eloise Vitelli (D-Sagadahoc) and representative Sophie Warren and other esteemed Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Anghy Tehuitzil. I am a student from the University of Maine, Farmington, and I am testifying in support of LD, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive Autonomy. I am testifying on behalf of my organization, Maine Youth Power.

As a proud woman, daughter, niece, granddaughter, and an older sister to two younger sisters, I feel the right to eagerly stress the importance that Maine passes LD 780, so that my family, myself, and thousands of women in Maine know that they have the right to reproductive autonomy under our states constitution and that Maine will always fight to protect women's private medical decisions.

There is a long history of women's bodies being controlled by the government, and after watching Roe v. Wade being overturned by the Supreme Court many women, including myself, felt a loss of hope, and that we still have no control over our own reproductive autonomy. As a woman of color, I also want to bring to awareness that abortion bans and restrictions disproportionately affect women of color more as they already face more structural barriers to health care. Threatening the rights of abortion care and other reproductive health care means risking lives through illegal, and unsafe abortion, that have resulted in instant death. I have heard agonizing and horrific stories after stories on how abortion laws have harmed various women or their gut-wrenching experience from fake abortion clinics in Maine. We must put an end to this and we can not go back! While Maine might not be one of the 21 states that have either banned or restricted abortion care procedures, the women in Maine can not feel safe until this bill is passed through a constitutional amendment.

Passing this bill means relieving the outrage and anguish of many women in Maine, making women feel protected under their state. Maine's constitutional amendment must fight for all women's dignity and justice by giving them their human rights—that means the right to make the decisions they want with their bodies. Our Reproductive autonomy rights are not a political issue! Thank you for your time.