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Dear Judiciary Committee,

I am a Family Medicine physician in Maine and care for patients throughout their entire lives. My duties include caring for students on a college campus, and reproductive healthcare rights are an integral part of my patients' bodily autonomy and rights to access healthcare. Reproductive rights are human rights. Period. Any decisions that patients make regarding how if, when, and how they chose to reproduce or terminate a pregnancy are, and should always be, at the discretion of a patient and their medical team. Medically supervised abortion is markedly safer than childbirth. According to recent medical studies, the risk of death associated with childbirth is more than TEN times higher than that with abortion. This does not include additional health challenges that one might experience with childbirth. Unfortunately, maternal mortality rates (i.e. rate of death associated with childbirth) are increasing in the US as we speak. Social services and supports for families with children are dwindling as federal child care investment is threatened, early childhood education is at risk of losing funding, and the cost of living has drastically increased even in recent years, making childbirth and childcare even more difficult. Ultimately, regardless of how difficult this decision may be for a patient, people should not be required to carry a pregnancy to its completion, for any reason. Period. I support this bill to establish reproductive health as a human right, and hope that you will too. Thank you for your time.