

Audrey Hufnagel
Damariscotta
LD 780

January 22, 2024

To: Joint Committee on Judiciary

From: Audrey Hufnagel

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 780 “Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive Autonomy”

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Audrey Hufnagel, I am from Damariscotta and I am writing as a young person urging you to vote ought to pass on LD 780 to protect abortion rights in Maine.

I was at my grandmother's house the day that Roe v. Wade was repealed. I remember sitting around her kitchen table — me, my mother and my grandmother, a women’s healthcare worker and longtime abortion rights advocate — in stunned silence, unable to process that this had actually happened. Now, I am learning to grapple with coming of age in the post-Rose era: with being a young woman in a country that no longer protects my right to make decisions about my body. Every day, I see news stories about states further restricting abortion access, people unable to obtain necessary reproductive care, healthcare providers being prosecuted. This is not right. All people deserve safe, accessible reproductive healthcare and access to abortion. Lawmakers and judges do not have the right to control people’s choices about their bodies and reproductive health.

In Maine, we are lucky enough to live in a state where abortion rights are not directly at risk, yet we cannot count on this continued security. Reproductive autonomy is a fundamental right and should not be subject to the results of elections. LD 780 presents an opportunity to secure this right in the Maine constitution. Furthermore, it brings this issue to the ballot, allowing Maine people to have a voice in legally enshrining reproductive rights in the state. Around the country, states are creating laws that greatly restrict abortion access, but Maine has the opportunity to be a leader in setting the opposite trend toward greater protection. As a young woman concerned for the future of reproductive rights in Maine, I therefore urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 780 and protect the right to choice and access to safe abortions for all.