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Cathy Walter
AREA
LD 780

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary Committee, I am Cathy Walter and I live in Gorham, I vote, and I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 780.

We the people need to insure that all human rights are codified in our constitution to protect those who are the most vulnerable and least able to protect and defend themselves against the mighty forces around us. Womens rights are human rights. Women's right to a safe, legal, abortion are not only under attack and being rolled back across this country but there are those trying to criminalize the medical procedure itself putting medical staff in a threatening position and forcing children caught in incestual violence, rape victims, and women with fetuses that won't make it to term to have unwanted children putting their physical and mental health at risk. We must act now and pass LD780 to prevent this from happening in Maine and to shine a beacon for the rest of America.

I understand that there are many of your constituents who are morally opposed to abortion, and they are free to never get one, but for the rest of us, we expect our government to insure that everyone can access the healthcare they need regardless of how any minority group or religious sect may feel. Abortion is healthcare and it saves lives. Putting abortion rights at risk by failing to pass LD780 risks creating thousands of unwanted children, which is a monumental travesty. I know. Because I am one.

My mother never wanted me. She tried to abort me several times before it was legal with at home remedies to no avail. When I was born with 2 club feet and twisted legs she was disgusted and felt she caused my affliction. But as was the norm in those days she just threw me in a play pen in the back room and hid me and my leg braces from the world. No one came in to hug me or play with me. Hell, my mother confessed she forgot to feed and change me and would often find me rolling in my own filth at the end of the day. All animals including humans who are treated in this way fail to identify with a parent, are taught they are unlovable and are emotionally scarred for life. I know. I am deeply scarred.

My father never wanted any children, but he was in the military and it was late 50s early 60s so he could just be absent most of the time. When he bothered to come home he was emotionally cruel, physically brutal and touched my sisters and I inappropriately all the time. I cannot share all the details of what it is like to be unwanted, to get held to different standards than your siblings, to be brutally whipped, punched, slapped, denigrated, and pushed away on a daily basis, but it is horrific. I remember starting at 5 or 6yrs old at bedtime I would wrap myself up in my sheet and roll back and forth crying "nobody loves me" over and over. Did anyone come show me some love? No. I was whipped with a belt until I shut up. No surprise, I was cutting my arms with razor blades, smoking cigarettes and jumping out my bedroom window to roam the streets before entering jr high in a quaint NH town. At 14 I got a job and was on my own. I didn't move out, but my parents had gotten divorced and my father had abandoned us and started a new family so I tucked in my chin, paid my own way, and focused on school so I could get a scholarship to college. Dare I mention my mother paid for both of my sisters college educations but not mine? Do you know what that does to a kid? I know.

It wasn't until my late twenties after several abusive relationships and newly married, that my sister, a psych major, made my mother do a full confession of her feelings and tell me all the terrible truths

about my upbringing that I had suppressed. I challenge you to imagine what it feels like to have your mother tell you to your face that she never wanted you, never loved you, she never even liked you. She tried to apologize but she and my father had normalized abuse and neglect and instilled fear of the world in me. Imagine never having anyone you can trust, never feeling safe, never belonging anywhere. It is a sad and lonely life. I know, I am living it.

No wonder I married an abusive man and stayed married so long. I was not taught what real love feels like. I put my children through hell while thinking I was a super mom working, raising kids and participating in all their activities but failing to rescue them from such an unhealthy environment. I unintentionally perpetuated the cycle of abuse. They were never spanked, but both of my children have been scarred by their parents brokenness. I know. I can see it in their eyes.

I am lucky I am smart, liked school, and found a way to succeed by the worlds standards. I put myself thru college twice graduating with high honors (only woman in graduating classes too), raised 2 beautiful children, worked in stem fields reinventing myself several times, and retired early. But I cannot say if I was ever really happy, although after years of therapy I have accepted what is. Believe me, I have no wish to end it all, but a few fleeting moments of joy barely echo in the deep inner throbbing ache of the loneliness and betrayal hole that a lack of mother love leaves in your heart forever. The best thing for all involved would have been to let my mother get a safe medical procedure and abort me. It is hell being broken and unwanted. I know, because I admit, I am.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 780 and help stop the rising population of unwanted children into a world in which they are not welcomed and for whom all support networks(welfare, health care, foster care, etc) are being reduced or eliminated. An abortion is an elimination of an embryo, a potential child, but forced birth of an unwanted child is sentencing the child to a lifetime of pain and abuse. I know.

Thank you.

P.S. if ya need a selfish reason to vote Ought to Pass on LD 780 that you can share with your constituents, remember, most unwanted children go on to commit suicide, become criminals, and/or fail to achieve costing society a pretty penny. Who do you think are looting your stores? Hooked on oxy at 14? Living on your streets? Filling your juvenile halls? Not those who are wanted and cared for.