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LD 780

I write to express my opposition to LD 780 and my disagreement with the Judiciary Committee's decision to advance this bill, which would seek to amend the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive Autonomy (in other words abortion).

This bill is titled as a protection of personal autonomy, and is presented as a protection of a right to privacy and to make private medical decisions and choices about family planning. These aims themselves are admirable. I firmly believe that everyone has a right to personal reproductive autonomy and a right to privacy. I firmly believe in the right to use birth control and contraceptives (ie condoms), and support policies to make these products available over the counter.

I do not believe however that these rights should extend to the legality of abortion, a procedure which even the most vehement defenders of the pro-choice position must concede entails (at a minimum) the destruction of a future human life. There is no other medical procedure or purported act of personal autonomy which does this. I do not deny the hardship's that unplanned pregnancy can cause. I acknowledge that many people whom I consider to be of utmost good character believe with full sincerity that abortion should be permitted or that it is a right under our Federal Constitution. But I simply do not believe that the legality of abortion (and especially not the holding of *Roe v. Wade*) can be convincingly defended. Absent extenuating circumstances, such as a threat to the mother's life or health, or the causing of the pregnancy by rape or incest, abortion should not be permitted. Abortion bans are not about trying to violate anyone's right to privacy nor are they about controlling anyone's body or imposing any view of religion or morality on the public. Rather, they aim to ensure that we all have the most basic chance there is, the chance to be born. One's right to make their own personal and private choices does not mean that one should be able to make a choice which destroys a future life (if not a person) and denies the unborn child his or her own lifetime of choices, opportunity, and experience.

The Supreme Court has correctly returned the issue of abortion to the voters and elected representatives with their opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson*, recognizing that our Federal Constitution neither prohibits to protects abortion. States are free to permit or prohibit abortion as they choose, and may also amend their own state constitutions to permit or protect the practice. Regardless of what ends up becoming of our nation's abortion policies, the *Dobbs* opinion represents a victory for constitutional law. I do hope however, that in having now rejected the idea of a (federal) Constitutional right to abortion we can also begin to reconsider the wisdom of permitting the procedure itself, as many other states have now done (just as they did before *Roe*).

I respectfully express my disagreement with the Judiciary Committee. I hope that this proposed amendment will be voted down by the legislative body (or if it passes there too, is rejected by the voters) and that perhaps in the future this state legislature will consider passing laws prohibiting most abortions.