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China  
LD 253

Members of the judiciary, I submit the following testimony to you today to voice my strong opposition to any legislation that seeks to restrict MaineCare coverage of abortion services.

My concerns center on the following key points:

\* Healthcare Equity:

\* Restricting MaineCare coverage creates a two-tiered healthcare system, where access to essential medical care depends on income.

\* This disproportionately affects low-income individuals, who already face significant barriers to healthcare.

\* It is fundamentally unjust to deny access to a legal and medically necessary procedure based on financial status.

\* Impact on Women's Health:

\* Denying coverage does not eliminate the need for abortions; it forces individuals to seek potentially unsafe alternatives.

\* This can lead to serious health complications and even death.

\* It is a matter of public health to ensure access to safe and legal abortion services.

\* Personal Autonomy:

\* Decisions about reproductive healthcare are deeply personal and should be made between a patient and their doctor.

\* Government interference in these decisions undermines individual autonomy and medical expertise.

\* It is vital that people are able to make their own informed healthcare decisions.

\* Economic Consequences:

\* Restricting access to abortion can have significant economic consequences for individuals and families.

\* It can limit educational and career opportunities, perpetuate cycles of poverty, and negatively impact the well-being of children.

\* Consistency with Healthcare Principles:

\* MaineCare is designed to provide access to necessary healthcare for low-income individuals.

\* Abortion is a legal and medically recognized procedure, and it should be covered like any other essential healthcare service.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to reject any legislation that would restrict MaineCare coverage of abortions. Such restrictions would create unacceptable disparities in healthcare access, endanger women's health, and violate fundamental principles of personal autonomy."

Key considerations:

\* Emphasize Healthcare: Frame the issue as a matter of healthcare access, not just a political debate.

\* Focus on Facts: Use data and evidence to support your arguments.

\* Highlight the Impact on Individuals: Share stories and examples of how these restrictions affect real people.

In closing, I implore you to consider the profound consequences of this legislation. We are not debating abstract policy; we are deciding whether to deny essential healthcare to our most vulnerable citizens. We are choosing whether to force individuals into impossible situations, where their health, their futures, and their very lives are placed at risk.

This is not about politics; it is about human dignity. It is about the fundamental right to control one's own body and destiny. To deny someone the ability to make informed

medical decisions based on their financial circumstances is not only unjust, it is cruel.

Imagine the mother facing a devastating medical diagnosis, forced to carry a pregnancy to term against her doctor's advice, simply because she lacks the means to pay. Imagine the young woman, trapped in a cycle of poverty, denied the opportunity to build a better life because she cannot access essential healthcare. These are not hypothetical scenarios; they are the stark realities that this legislation will create.

We, as a society, have a moral obligation to protect the health and well-being of all our citizens, regardless of their income. To deny access to safe and legal abortion through MaineCare is to abandon that obligation, to turn our backs on those who need us most.

I urge you, members of this committee, to choose compassion over cruelty, equality over disparity, and healthcare over hardship. Reject this legislation. Uphold the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, and ensure that every Mainer, regardless of their income, has the power to make their own healthcare decisions.