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China  
LD 682

Esteemed members of the Judiciary, I submit the following testimony today with a heavy heart to express my resolute opposition to LD 682, "An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Abortions." This bill, in its essence, seeks to dismantle the fundamental right of individuals to make deeply personal and often agonizing decisions about their own bodies and their own lives.

LD 682, with its subtle yet insidious changes, does not merely tweak existing laws; it strikes at the very core of bodily autonomy. It replaces the vital, nuanced judgment of a physician, guided by years of expertise and the unique circumstances of their patient, with rigid, restrictive language that disregards the complexities of human life. The shift from "physician determines it is necessary" to "medically necessary to preserve the life or health of the mother" is not a minor semantic change; it is a chilling erosion of trust in the medical profession and a dangerous intrusion into the doctor-patient relationship.

Imagine, if you will, a woman facing a devastating diagnosis of a fetal anomaly, a condition that will condemn her child to a life of unimaginable suffering or an early, painful death. Imagine the agonizing hours spent researching, consulting with specialists, and grappling with the impossible choices before her. LD 682, despite its supposed exceptions, narrows the definition of "lethal" to a point that ignores the vast spectrum of human suffering. It denies these women the compassionate care they desperately need and deserve. It forces them to endure the trauma of carrying a pregnancy to term, knowing the pain that awaits them and their child.

Consider the young woman, barely out of her teens, who discovers she is pregnant. She is struggling to finish her education, working multiple jobs to support herself, and facing a future that suddenly seems impossible. LD 682 would impose additional hurdles, forcing her to navigate a maze of bureaucratic requirements and potentially denying her access to timely care. This bill does not promote responsibility; it perpetuates cycles of poverty and despair.

Furthermore, the mandated reporting requirements regarding race, marital status, and education level are not only intrusive but also deeply concerning. These data points serve no legitimate medical purpose and only fuel the flames of stigma and discrimination. They transform a private medical decision into a public record, potentially exposing vulnerable individuals to judgment and harassment.

Let us be clear: LD 682 is not about protecting life; it is about controlling women. It is about imposing a narrow, moralistic worldview on individuals who are facing some of the most difficult and complex decisions of their lives. It is about stripping them of their agency and denying them the right to self-determination.

We must remember that these are not abstract debates; they are real-life scenarios with profound consequences. They affect our mothers, our sisters, our daughters, our friends, and our neighbors. They affect the very fabric of our community.

Therefore, I implore you, members of the committee, to reject LD 682. Stand on the side of compassion, on the side of medical expertise, and on the side of individual liberty. Protect the rights of all Mainers to make their own healthcare decisions. In doing so, you will uphold the fundamental ideals upon which our nation was founded: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Let us not allow fear and ideology to dictate the lives of those who are already facing unimaginable hardship.

Thank you.