



Grandmothers For Reproductive Rights

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Senator Bailey, Representative Gramlich and Esteemed Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services,

My name is Cait Vaughan and I am here today to testify on behalf of my employer, Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights (GRR!), and the more than 600 Maine residents we represent, in support of LD 538. We are a grassroots organization that amplifies the voices and status of grandmothers and elders who work intergenerationally, through grassroots education, advocacy, and community-centered initiatives to secure access to sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice for present and future generations.

Abortion care providers require a higher-than-average level of protection due to the historic violence of the anti-abortion movement towards both providers and clinics, and because of the current patchwork legal landscape where officials in restricted states are seeking action against providers in states where abortion rights are protected. The National Abortion Federation (NAF) tracks violence, harassment and disruption toward abortion care professionals and clinics. In 2022, NAF reported a 20% increase in death threats and other threats of harm from the year prior, as well as a 220% increase in stalking in that same time period (source). Each year on March 10th, our movement honors Abortion Provider Appreciation Day, wherein we acknowledge the murder of Doctor David Gunn by an anti-abortion extremist on that day in 1993. I hope this history provides some context for why abortion providers are an exceptional group of clinicians, worthy of exceptional consideration.

Last year, this body passed a shield law to protect providers and patients of abortion and gender affirming care. Its passage sent a clear message that Maine law should govern Maine people and providers, and states without our protections cannot enact their laws within our borders. There are workforce shortages throughout the healthcare system, and if Maine wants to continue to be able to attract talented and committed clinicians of all statuses, then we need laws in place to protect the integrity of clinical judgment and prescribing decisions. LD 538 brings Maine statute even more into clear alignment with common sense protections for clinicians who serve our state's population with essential, time sensitive, and life-saving healthcare. We at Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights urge you to vote Ought To Pass on LD 538.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Vaughan

Cait Vaughan, Director of Programs & Outreach

Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights (GRR!) works, through education and advocacy, to secure access to sexual & reproductive health, rights & justice for present & future generations.