

Hello,

A Facebook post containing information regarding a bill proposal called HP 635 came across my feed. I sincerely hope this is a sick joke. I am a labor, delivery, postpartum, and recovery nurse. I am also a mother of 2, my youngest is 2 months old. I labored for 40 hours with my first, pushed for 3 hrs and he went into fetal distress which resulted in an urgent c-section. There was no other safe way to get my son out. With my second, he was measuring even larger than my first and Maternal Fetal Medicine recommended a repeat c-section to which I agreed. Towards the end of the pregnancy I struggled with blood pressure issues and labor would have been hard on my health. But I am just one of MANY women this bill strips rights away from.

Take religion out of it. Church and state are supposedly separate right?! I have been a nurse in my field for 7 years. **WOMEN DO NOT GET ABORTIONS AT FULL TERM. THIS IS FALSE INFORMATION AND OUTRIGHT LIES SPREAD BY SUPPOSEDLY CHRISTIAN PEOPLE.** No doctor would go against their medical ethics for this. I've delivered many induction at term for fetuses that had already passed in utero or were not compatible with life. Helped women throw their miscarriages. I've grieved with these mothers helped them to the bathroom after birth, held them while they cried. Dressed their little babies in little gowns for them to hold one last time in their arms knowing they'll never see these babies grow. My job is as hard as it is beautiful. I've also helped women who did not wish to be mothers through their decisions to end the pregnancy before it got too far along. A decision they did not make lightly and still grieved over. I've helped women who cried these pregnancies to term and give their babies up to adopter or the state. A decision that was both strong and difficult for them to make. Birth control is so much more than preventing unwanted pregnancies. For some people it's necessary medication for certain medical conditions. To that end, why would you want to force people to put themselves at risk for becoming pregnant with a child they do not want, cannot afford, or simply don't have the ability to care for. I see this enough in my line of work. Women moving to Maine because until now it's one of the few states left that protects women's rights.

Why am I being punished for the fact my pelvis is fused and cannot open to allow for a vaginal birth? A c-section is not something I wanted to happen, the recovery is so intense- requiring a lot of assistance from family and friends. It's the most humbling experience I've ever encountered. I love my sons and consider myself a good mother. I would love to have another child one day, but with this bill I'd have to move out of Maine for it to be legal as I would need another c-section. Not to mention tubal ligation for those who are done having or do not wish to have children.

Don't even get me started on postpartum depression. Depression is at an all time high as it were. Becoming a mother/parent is a wonderful and difficult time all at once. Some people need help to create balance in their brains. It doesn't make them any less or weak people. They sought out help! Denying them that help will inevitably lead to increased risk of self harm or harm to children. Have fun fighting Big Pharma on denying access to mental health medication. The one time I actually support Big Pharma.

Lastly: why in the HELL would you want to reward those who harm or attack women or identify as such- especially people who are pregnant?! Reducing charges?! It's essentially saying, "Please abusers and rapists: come to Maine because you'll only get a slap on the wrist." The entirety of this bill is an attack against women. It spews hate. And the fact that a woman was involved with drafting this is simply disgusting and unconscionable. I expect nothing less from white men in office these days.

Do better for Maine.

-Mary Elizabeth Violette

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I am a per diem nurse at EMMC. Please excuse any spelling errors as this was written with intense emphasis and emotion.