

Anne M. Gallaudet
Scarborough, Maine

March 24, 2025

Re: LD 253, An Act to Prevent the MaineCare Program from Covering Abortion Services

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Joint Judiciary Committee

I appreciate this opportunity to address you on this important matter. My name is Anne Gallaudet. I am a resident of Scarborough, Maine. I am writing *in opposition* of LD 253.

Abortion services are provided through MaineCare (Medicaid) to its low-income members. Abortion services that are not federally approved Medicaid services are funded by the State of Maine. <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/blog/access-abortion-care-maine-2022-07-06#:~:text=MaineCare%20uses%20state%20general%20funds%20to%20support,if%20the%20patient's%20life%20is%20in%20danger>, Federal Medicaid, because of the Hyde Amendment, only covers abortions in cases of rape, incest or when the pregnant person's life is in danger.

This bill repeals Maine Revised Statutes Title 22, section 3196, ending abortion coverage for MaineCare covered (low income) people. I oppose it because of the following:

Abortion services are part of core or essential reproductive health care services and should only be a matter discussed between and individual and their health care provider, not anyone else and certainly not the State.

Passage of this bill will disproportionately impact traditionally underserved and marginalized people – people who are low-income and disproportionately people of color, the LGBTQ community, indigenous people, etc. See <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11605993/#:~:text=In%20the%20fragmented%20abortion%20access,of%20Medicaid%20coverage%20of%20abortion;https://www.lwv.org/blog/hyde-amendment-abortion-barrier-hiding-plain-sight>.

Abortion was not legalized until I was in college when the US Supreme Court established a woman's constitutional right to abortion in Roe v. Wade. Before then, the stories of women who had abortions in unsafe environments or using unsafe means were common, heart breaking and maddening. People died after experiencing unsafe abortions or enduring lifelong injuries. Today we all have heard similar stories from women living in states prohibiting abortions since the overturning of Roe. As then (before Roe) and now, lower income women face more barriers when denied safe abortions.

Passing this bill will lead to increased mortality rates for pregnant people covered by MaineCare as well as increase their suffering by further impacting their financial precariousness. For example, if they choose to pay for an abortion nonetheless, they will likely have to forego paying rent or buying food. If they end up having a baby, they likely will not be in a financial situation to properly care for the child.

I wish the US was more supportive of our vulnerable populations, but we are not. We have cute images of new babies (always white) in our heads, and that is where the caring stops. We have lost our communal empathy for others; we are wrongly full of judgment and managing our neighbors' lives.

Thank you for considering my comment. I urge you to vote "ought not to pass" on LD 253.

Anne Gallaudet, Scarborough, ME