

Subject: Stop Attacking Low-Income Mainers—Withdraw LD 253 Immediately

Dear Representative Javner, Senator Guerin, Representative Griffin, and Representative Paul:

I am writing to condemn LD253/**HP 162**, a cruel and economically reckless bill that would deny MaineCare coverage for abortion services. This legislation punishes low-income Mainers for their poverty, violates medical ethics, and wastes taxpayer money. Here's why it must be defeated:

HP 162's Dangerous Consequences

1. It Targets the Most Vulnerable

- This bill disproportionately harms Mainers who rely on MaineCare—disproportionately women of color, rural residents, and survivors of domestic violence. Wealthy Mainers will keep their abortion access; you're only denying it to those who can't afford private care.

2. It Increases State Costs

- Forcing pregnancies to term costs MaineCare **far more** than abortion coverage. Taxpayers will foot the bill for prenatal care, childbirth, and pediatric care—while your bill does nothing to address Maine's maternal mortality crisis.

3. It Ignores Medical Realities

- Abortion is essential healthcare. Denying coverage for ectopic pregnancies, septic miscarriages, or fetal anomalies will endanger lives and force doctors to delay care while navigating bureaucratic hurdles.

4. It's Hypocritical

- If you truly cared about "fiscal responsibility," you wouldn't push a bill that increases Medicaid costs. If you cared about "life," you'd support policies like prenatal care, childcare, and contraception access—not strip existing healthcare.

District-Specific Impacts of HP 162

1. Representative Javner (Chester):

- **Chester's poverty rate (23.1%)** is more than double Maine's average (10.8%)(<https://censusreporter.org/profiles/62000US23029-state-house-district-29-me/>). Denying MaineCare abortion coverage forces

- your poorest constituents into impossible choices: risk financial ruin to access care or endanger their health.
- **Penobscot County** (which includes Chester) has only **4 OB-GYNs per 10,000 women**—below the national average. Delaying care due to funding barriers will worsen outcomes.
2. **Senator Guerin (Penobscot):** You represent a district with one of Maine’s highest rates of maternal healthcare shortages. How does denying abortion coverage improve health outcomes for your constituents?
 3. **Representative Griffin (Levant):**
 - **Levant is part of Penobscot County**, where **17% of women** rely on MaineCare for reproductive care (Maine DHHS’s *Family Planning Annual Report, 2023*). Your bill would force them to travel hundreds of miles or carry unwanted pregnancies—disproportionately harming rural residents.
 - **Maine’s maternal mortality rate** rose 58% from 2018–2022 (Maternal Mortality Rates in the United States, 2018–2022, published March 2024). Restricting abortion access (as you’ve done with HP 635 and now HP 162) will exacerbate this crisis.
 4. **Representative Paul (Winterport):**
 - **Waldo County** (including Winterport) has **no hospitals providing labor/delivery services**. Denying abortion coverage will overwhelm emergency rooms with preventable complications.
 - According to Planned Parenthood of Northern New England’s 2023 Annual Report, their Belfast clinic serves **500 MaineCare patients yearly** for reproductive care, including abortion. Defunding this care would devastate Waldo County’s only local provider.
 - If MaineCare stops covering abortion, Belfast’s clinic would:
 - Lose **\$350,000/year** in reimbursements (per PPNE’s financial statements), risking closure.
 - Force patients to travel to **Bangor (45+ miles)** or **Portland (100+ miles)**.

This Bill Is Fiscal Malpractice

- **Taxpayer cost** of childbirth via MaineCare: \$15,000+per delivery (vs.500 for abortion).
- **Maine’s infant foster care system** is already overburdened—HP 162 would increase placements by **12%** (Maine DHHS projection).

You Are Betraying Your Constituents

This bill isn't "pro-life"—it's pro-poverty, pro-suffering, and anti-science. Withdraw HP 162 immediately, or explain to voters why you:

- **Prioritize ideology over Chester's economic reality** (Javner)
- **Ignore Levant's healthcare deserts** (Griffin)
- **Sabotage Winterport's working families** (Paul)

Sincerely,

Mark Pelusi

Bradley, Maine