

My name is Andrea Mooney, and I am a registered voter and resident of Pittston, Maine. I am writing today to oppose each of the following seven bills that are being discussed at this Judiciary Committee hearing today, on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025:

1. LD 253 An Act to Prevent the MaineCare Program from Covering Abortion Services
2. LD682 An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Abortions
3. LD 886 An Act to Regulate Medication Abortions
4. LD 887 An Act to Make Manufacturers Responsible for Proper Disposal of Abortion Drugs and Require a Health Care Provider to Be Physically Present During a Chemical Abortion
5. LD 975 An Act to Repeal Laws Allowing Abortion and to Criminalize Abortion
6. LD 1007 An Act to Update the State's Informed Consent Laws Regarding Drug-induced Abortion
7. LD1154 An Act to Require That Informed Consent for Abortion Include Information on Perinatal Hospice

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I am **so** sick of the tired excuses used by the “Christian conservatives” to oppress and control women. It is very obvious to many of us all that this is a thinly veiled mission to punish and control women, and your (limited and incorrect) religious arguments are weak. I started thinking about what information I could provide that might help me reason with you about the way society really needs to change to support families and end abortion. As I was reading these seven bills that have been brought forth by a number of lawmakers, including my own local representative, Michael Lemelin, it started to become very obvious to me that these laws are not intended to solve the real problem of abortion. No, these laws are to punish women for no longer being entirely “controllable” by the men in their lives.

If you were really interested in a solution, you would be talking about what it is going to take to make it possible for someone to have a baby without being harmed or disadvantaged by doing so. You would be looking at universal healthcare, low cost and widely available childcare, economic protections like paid parental leave, paid sick time, and closing the “gender pay gap” so that women can have babies and families still prosper without the financial hit that comes from taking extended leaves. You would be increasing school funding to prepare these little ones for becoming proud and productive citizens of the United States. You would be working on things like affordable housing and community building.

Since it appears that you are unserious in your desire to actually end abortion, I will instead point out to you the deeply inconsistent message you seem to be sending with these bills

about your belief system. Instead, do something that will actually move the issue in the direction of your real Christian values. Cherry picking a few types of healthcare treatment to ban, for made up reasons to support your “values,” is shameful. Jesus didn’t decide to only heal the people he “approved” of; he came to heal everyone he met who was in need. He came to save ALL OF US, no exceptions.

I was raised as a Catholic and attended Sunday school and mass throughout my childhood into my teen years. The message I got from my experience being raised Catholic does not match what is happening here, at all. I was taught that the nuns were the original “social workers” caring for the sick, poor, homeless, and destitute. We embrace humanity from all over, no exceptions. God does not make mistakes.

I stopped identifying as Catholic due to the ways I watched as Christianity has been weaponized against women in our current society throughout my lifetime. I discovered I was gay at a young age, and all of a sudden the idea that “God does not make mistakes” was turned on its head. I was a gay teenager in the early 90’s while our society was reeling from what the government decided to do about HIV/AIDS – nothing. We, as flawed humans, had decided we knew better than God, and blamed sickness on people who were gay. Ignored the public health crisis that was unfolding until a child, Ryan White, became ill after a blood transfusion.

The God I knew did not make mistakes. People make mistakes. And I believe each of these bills is evidence of the hubris and arrogance of a group of flawed humans, not the “will of God.”

God is the source of ALL: all of life, all of the cosmos, all of the things we don’t know yet or may never know. God is not incompatible with science. In fact, science is the human pursuit of better understanding these wonders.

God is not incompatible with critical thinking. There is a lot of blindly “following the leader” in organized religion. Rarely in Christianity do followers “question” God’s plan, except, of course, when the humans are uncomfortable and don’t trust God, as these bills demonstrate. Cherry picking things from the Bible to defend your position is not what God had in mind - that is a human issue caused by people who exploit God for power and control over others, to their own nefarious ends.

The common conservative Christian arguments against abortion lean on the “sanctity of life.” I completely agree life is sacred. ALL life. NO exceptions. Protecting life is not preventing a medical procedure that is needed for the survival of the patient. It is providing the support and care for all lives/life in all ways. If you want to eliminate abortion, you have

a lot of work to do – you are currently focusing on the wrong things. Here’s a few items you can focus on if you truly want to eliminate abortion and support ALL life:

- Eliminate sexual violence and abuse of women and children
- Eliminate domestic and intimate partner violence in families
- Guarantee healthcare for all humans, including coverage for pregnancy and childbirth, reproductive healthcare (of ALL kinds, including abortion for medical necessity and widely accessible birth control for men and women)
- Guarantee low cost/affordable child care for ALL
- Paid parenting time off for ALL –parenting leave for any/all parents (moms and dads, regardless of who birthed the new baby) of **at least** 12 weeks (please note that every other wealthy nation on the planet already provides this to its citizens, we are very behind the times \*\*see website link below)
- Paid sick leave for all – to care for the family as it grows
- REAL Workplace support for lactating moms who are back in the workforce
- Develop safe, affordable housing to accommodate families with kids
- Fully fund/increase funding for school budgets – including school lunches, sports, extracurricular activities, and after school programs
- Make transportation accessible and affordable
- Eliminate the “pink tax” women pay for building families with eliminating the “gender pay gap,” protect pregnant workers from employment discrimination, and level the career playing field for women who choose to take time off to raise a family
- Enact mandatory child support laws that are both compulsory and financially adequate for child rearing
- Build career paths for the young people to grow up and become productive adult citizens by funding higher education and trade school - so that these young adults don’t drown in school debt
- Pay a mandatory living wage for ALL
- Encourage a more kid-friendly society through laws and policies that are kid-inclusive
- Treat the planet like it is the only home we have and stop shortsighted capitalist gains at the expense of our survival.

I believe that our Maine legislature, and our state and federal government as a whole, should quit imposing religious beliefs on citizens and stick to “establish(ing) Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty (preamble)” for Americans. I think we also need to remember that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or

prohibiting the free exercise thereof (1<sup>st</sup> amendment),” and “The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated (fourth amendment).”

Each of the bills discussed at today’s hearing interferes with my Constitutional rights to freedom of religious expression (most especially LD 886 & LD 975), and all seven bills indirectly attempt to hold me legally subject to a set of religious beliefs, which the First Amendment protects me from. Several of these bills also violate my Fourth Amendment right to be “secure in my person(s), house(s), papers, and effects” and “free from unreasonable search and seizures” by mandating a government reporting and data collection component to my personal medical data, as well as mandating when, where, and for what purpose I get healthcare services.

I believe it is the wrong move to attempt to control women’s bodies through the use of these specious bills. Our collective time and resources would be much better spent addressing the economic and social welfare barriers to family creation than banning medical care that is safe, effective, and lifesaving. Thank you for your time.

Source for data on paid parental leave:

\*\*<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/12/16/u-s-lacks-mandated-paid-parental-leave/>