

Kara Evans
Portland
LD 975

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

My name is Kara Evans from Portland, Maine. In addition to being a Maine resident, Social Worker, and woman, I am a hopeful future mother: My husband and I are currently undergoing IVF treatments. I am here today to speak in opposition of LD 975.

This bill defines a human being as, “beginning at the moment of conception.” This alone threatens access to fertility treatments. During IVF, multiple eggs are fertilized at once, and the most viable embryo is implanted. Embryos are considered the outcome of conception, and therefore human beings under this bill. If IVF patients choose to not store their extra embryos for future use and medical staff dispose of them accordingly, this bill opens the door for both of their prosecution.

LD 975 fails to account for pregnancies that endanger the lives of women or in which the fetus is not viable. Ectopic pregnancies, which make up 1 to 2% of pregnancies, cannot be carried successfully to term, and must be terminated for the health of the pregnant person. Under this bill, people could suffer and die for an embryo that could never be brought to term.

States that have passed similar bills to LD 975 have seen a devastating increase in maternal mortality rates. Since enacting their abortion ban, Texas saw maternal deaths increase by 56% in just two years. Additionally, three studies have shown an increase in infant mortality rates in states that have enacted abortion bans. LD 975 is a callous call for the death of Maine women and infants.

LD 975 would allow Maine’s government to access intimate, identifying health information of those who have suffered miscarriages and suffered domestic abuse. As a former clinician familiar with HIPAA, this bill proposes a disturbing invasion of privacy and creates barriers to accessing timely and effective medical treatment. It makes it less likely that people will seek medical care when they need it out of fear, and less likely that it will be provided due to medical staff’s fear.

LD 975 dares to claim that the government accessing our personal health information would “improve health outcomes within the state.” It is wildly inappropriate that politicians believe they know more about the health of women than women and our doctors. At the same time, it weakens protections for pregnant people against violence, both domestic and other, by striking “Elevated Aggravated Assault Against a Pregnant Person” and “Domestic Violence Elevated Assault Against a Pregnant Person” from the Maine Criminal Code. Even if a fetus would be considered a human being from conception, which it is not, there is no reason why the vulnerable person carrying them should have their protections reduced.

In a political climate where funding for children and families is being slashed, our Representatives’ time would be better spent making Maine a safer place for children and more desirable climate for parents instead of inserting themselves into the most personal, intimate, and often painful parts of their constituents’ lives. Mainers do not want the government in our bedrooms. Maine women do not want their elected officials in our exam rooms.

LP 975 calls for egregious government overreach. Passing it would not only endanger personal freedoms, privacy, and bodily autonomy, but lives as well. I ask that this committee not pass this bill for the safety and freedom of all current and prospective childbearing Mainers.

References

Gemmill, Alison, et al. "US abortion bans and infant mortality." *JAMA*, 13 Feb. 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2024.28517>.