

Good morning, and thank you, Judiciary Committee, for allowing me to submit my written testimony here today. My name is Hannah R. Kazal, MD, ScM, and I am a resident of Gardiner in district 54, and I am writing in opposition to the abortion restriction bill LD 975/HP635.

As a practicing Family Physician in this state, I believe Maine has a responsibility to provide equitable access to health care for its citizens, and abortion is a crucial element of this. With abortion restrictions expanding across the United States, we are watching more pregnant people and infants die. Data from the CDC show a 50-130 fold increased risk of death from pregnancy-related causes compared to abortion. As an abortion provider, I know that the care I provide my patients is safe, essential, and restricting access will only have far-reaching negative health consequences for our collective Maine families and communities.

Patients walk into our clinics from diverse backgrounds and circumstances, and they all deserve safe, comprehensive, and confidential medical care. I have cared for a teenager who was the victim of a rape, a mother who couldn't stretch her paycheck to cover another infant in her home, to a college student who knew continuing her pregnancy would completely derail her education and future career. These are your daughters, your sisters, and your mothers. They deserve equitable and high quality health care, which includes abortion services.

States that have restricted abortion access are now suffering from rising infant death rates. In a recent study published February 13, 2025 in the Journal of the American Medical Association, authors estimate that infant deaths increased by 5.6%, and 478 infant lives would have been saved had these bans not been signed into law<sup>1</sup>. It is alarming that even with rising infant deaths—the opposite outcome these states desired— nothing has been done to reverse the bans.

Furthermore, Maine is a state that has welcomed communities of color to its rugged land, from playing a crucial role in the Underground Railroad to our current practice of welcoming refugees seeking a safe place to call home. These abortion bans proposed today disproportionately impact communities of color, where health and social inequities are stark. For example, Black infants died at an 11% higher rate than expected in those states where abortion bans were enacted<sup>1</sup>. Signing this bill into law would set our state on a destructive path into the past.

I urge you to support Maine patients, families, physicians, and communities and vote no.

<sup>1</sup>*Gemmill A, Franks AM, Anjur-Dietrich S, et al. US Abortion Bans and Infant Mortality. JAMA. Published online February 13, 2025. doi:10.1001/jama.2024.28517*

<https://www.acog.org/advocacy/abortion-is-essential/come-prepared/abortion-access-fact-sheet>