

Lauren McEnroe
Blue Hill
LD 975

Hello friends, bellow is an op-ed my peer and I wrote for the Bowdoin community about the new bill being introduced in Maine to criminalize abortion. I thought I would share it here as well along with a poem I wrote for one of my classes last semester. Please share with friends and family and submit your testimony before 3/28 at 9:30am when the hearing will take place.

Tomorrow the bill LD 975: "An Act to Repeal Laws Allowing Abortion and to Criminalize Abortion," will be introduced to the 132nd Maine Legislature. Sponsored by Representative Abigail Griffin and co-sponsored by Representative Michael Lemelin, this legislation seeks to repeal existing laws that permit abortion in Maine and aims to criminalize the procedure. As summarized by the 132nd Maine Legislature, "this bill repeals the laws authorizing abortion in the State. The bill also repeals the crimes of elevated aggravated assault on a pregnant person and domestic violence elevated aggravated assault on a pregnant person and instead defines "human being" and "person" for purposes of the Maine Criminal Code, including for purposes of the statutes prohibiting murder, assault, domestic violence assault and other offenses against a human being or a person, to include all human beings beginning at the moment of conception."

So what does this mean? Essentially, LD: 975 would make major changes to multiple sections of state law and criminalize abortion procedures. If passed, this bill would revise the definition of "human being" in Maine Criminal Code to include the moment of conception onwards as human being, granting legal personhood to embryos and fetuses. It would also remove references to abortion from different state statutes, including but not limited to those regarding reproductive health care services, family planning, and medical records. It would remove previous legal protections for abortion services, repeal whole chapters of law relating to reproductive health, and add new reporting requirements for miscarriages.

LD: 975 defines "abortion" as the intentional interruption of pregnancy and would require healthcare professionals to report every miscarriages to the state, while purportedly trying to ensure the confidentiality of the patient and healthcare providers. Additionally, it would remove previous provisions regarding abortion services from medical professional regulations, insurance coverage, and emergency medical service information collection. By expanding the definition of "person" to include conception and removing abortion-related legal protections, the bill effectively criminalizes abortion in Maine, and treats abortion as a potential criminal offense under existing assault and homicide statutes.

LD: 975 is an egregious assault on bodily autonomy and reproductive rights and we urge you to use your voice and submit testimony in its opposition, and/or write to our elected officials in opposition. If you wish to submit testimony, here is a guide:

Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn, Members of the Judiciary Committee, I am Lauren McEnroe , I live in Blue Hill , and I am a mother of 4 children.

I am writing in opposition of LD 975, An Act to Repeal Laws Allowing Abortion and to Criminalize Abortion which strips Mainers of essential reproductive rights and endangers the well-being of women and families across Maine.

I am the face of late term abortions. I wanted my first child more than anything in the world. I had complications by 20 weeks. Doctors wanted me to abort. I didn't believe in abortion so I went to specialist after specialist trying to save my baby, but they all told me the outcome was "grim". At 7 months there was no heartbeat at my last checkup. They scheduled me to be induced the next day.

While at the hospital I still fought not to have an abortion which I thought was an D and C. I wanted her to have her dignity and keep her little body intact. I labored for 27 hours to hold her lifeless body. I still grieve for her every April when her birthday

comes around. She has a headstone that my children and I visit every year.

I was so against late term abortion for years, without ever knowing that I had one myself, as I was given a suppository to start labor. I had no idea this was considered abortion. If I didn't have access to abortion drugs that day, my child's rotting corpse would have killed me. If so how I managed to survive sepsis, my womb would be barren and I wouldn't have the 3 beautiful children I have now.

Years later I came to the Blue Hill hospital after passing out from blood loss from a miscarriage. When my kids found my paperwork when we were moving, they freaked out because it said "spontaneous abortion" on my discharge paperwork. When questioned, I told them what happened.

This is why criminalizing abortion is a slippery slope. The terminology used for miscarriage can be misleading. Women are already dying in other states because doctors won't touch them until they are near death and then they can finally treat them. It is too late in many cases.

Abortion bans do not reduce the number of abortions; they reduce the number of safe abortions. They put people's lives at risk, criminalize doctors, and strip individuals of their fundamental right to make private medical decisions. Every pregnancy is different, and so is every person facing one. Some pregnancies are nonviable. Some put the pregnant person's life at risk. Some occur under devastating circumstances, such as rape or incest. And sometimes, a person simply is not ready or able to carry a pregnancy to term. None of these deeply personal decisions should be dictated by the government.

If lawmakers genuinely cared about reducing abortions, they would expand access to contraception, comprehensive sex education, affordable childcare, and maternal healthcare. But this bill does none of that. Instead, it punishes people for their circumstances and removes their bodily autonomy. I urge you to reject this cruel and dangerous legislation. The government has no place in personal medical decisions. Let people make these choices with their doctors, their families, and their own conscience—