



March 28, 2025

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and the members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Abbie Strout-Bentes. I am the executive director of Safe Abortions For Everyone, also known as SAFE Maine; we are Maine's abortion fund. Our mission is to provide financial support to individuals traveling to, living in, or from Maine who need assistance paying for their abortion and associated costs, such as transportation, lodging, childcare, and lost wages. We provide funding for people who are uninsured, those whose insurance doesn't cover abortion care, and people who are unable to use their insurance.

We are writing to share our opposition to all efforts to restrict reproductive freedom and specifically ask this committee to vote "ought not to pass" on the following seven bills:

- LD 253 An Act to Prevent the MaineCare Program from Covering Abortion Services
- LD 682 An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Abortions
- LD 886 An Act to Regulate Medication Abortions
- 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
- LD 975 An Act to Repeal Laws Allowing Abortion and to Criminalize Abortion
- LD 1007 An Act to Update the State's Informed Consent Laws Regarding Drug-induced Abortion
- LD 1154 An Act to Require That Informed Consent for Abortion Include Information on Perinatal Hospice

The goal of these bills is to push abortion care out of reach for people who need it by restricting access, rolling back important changes that have made access to abortion more equitable in Maine, and outright banning this essential healthcare service. These bills are both dangerous and unnecessary.

We don't have to guess at how enacting these bills would harm our community - there is clear evidence from the 19 states with total or near total abortion bans that the outcomes are devastating. Here are a few examples of what people are experiencing:

- Josseli Barnica died in Texas after being denied life-saving miscarriage management care.<sup>1</sup>
- Candi Miller was too afraid to seek care and died at her home in Georgia.<sup>2</sup>
- Brittany Watts was arrested for having a miscarriage in Ohio.<sup>3</sup>
- Thousands of abortion seekers are forced to travel hundreds of miles and out of their state to get the health care they need.<sup>4</sup>

While it is clear that altogether banning abortion is the ultimate goal of anti-abortion lawmakers and activists, in states where they know it will be difficult to pass an abortion ban, restricting access to care continues to be a tactic used to push care out of reach. These types of restrictions disproportionately impact women of color, immigrants, low-income folks, young people, and folks living in rural areas. The Turnaway Study, conducted before the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*, by researchers at the University of California, was created to specifically study the harms of these types of restrictions that result in denying an individual a wanted abortion. The study showed that an individual's ability to make their own decisions about when and whether to become a parent has a lasting positive impact on their life including their health, their education, and their financial security.<sup>5</sup>

We are grateful for the work Maine's lawmakers have done to increase equitable access to abortion in Maine. You are moving us closer to a world where, no matter our zip code or how much money we make, we are able to access abortion care when we need it. Please continue to follow that trajectory by voting "ought not to pass" on these bills.

Sincerely,

Abbie Strout-Bentes

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.propublica.org/article/josseli-barnica-death-miscarriage-texas-abortion-ban>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.propublica.org/article/candi-miller-abortion-ban-death-georgia>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/brittany-watts-miscarriage-bathroom-charged-rcna135861>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/07/health/abortion-travel-doubled-gutmacher-report/index.html>

<sup>5</sup>

[https://www.ansirh.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/the\\_harms\\_of\\_denying\\_a\\_woman\\_a\\_wanted\\_abortion\\_4-16-2020.pdf](https://www.ansirh.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/the_harms_of_denying_a_woman_a_wanted_abortion_4-16-2020.pdf)