

Dawn York
South Portland
LD 253

Chairperson and members of the committee,

My name is Dawn York, of South Portland, and I am here today to strongly oppose any efforts to criminalize or limit access to abortion. I speak not only as a concerned citizen, survivor, and mother but mostly as someone who believes in the fundamental right to bodily autonomy and healthcare as a right.

Abortion is healthcare. It is a deeply personal and often complex decision, one that should be made between a person and their medical provider—not dictated by politicians. Criminalizing abortion does not stop people from needing it; it only makes it more dangerous. History has shown us that when abortion is restricted, people suffer. They are forced to carry pregnancies against their will, endure medical risks, and, in some cases, resort to unsafe and deadly measures.

The consequences of restricting abortion fall hardest on the most vulnerable among us—low-income individuals, people of color, survivors of abuse, and those in rural areas with limited healthcare access. Forcing someone to give birth against their will is not pro-life; it is an act of control, one that disregards the mental, physical, and economic realities people face.

I urge you to reject any efforts to take away reproductive rights or limit access to these procedures or medications. Listen to the overwhelming majority of Mainers who support access to abortion. Listen to the doctors who warn of the dangers these restrictions create. Listen to the ones who have faced this decision and know that every pregnancy is different, every story is unique, and every person deserves the right to control their own body and future.

Thank you for your time.