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LD 975

Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn, Members of the Judiciary Committee, I am Taylor Carrescia. I currently live in Connecticut, but beginning this summer, I will be a student at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. I am writing in opposition to 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.

The state of Maine has, since 1973 via *Roe v. Wade* and 1993 via state legislation, prided itself on being a safe haven for reproductive rights. I know that this history is nothing new to you, but I hope that in your decision making, you are cognizant of the foundation this bill threatens to not only ignore, but to destroy. The right to choose is intrinsic to the democracy upon which our country was founded and Maine has the opportunity to continue to uphold this fundamental value even in the face of the political turmoil that has compelled other states to turn a blind eye to true American qualities. Many northeastern states have continued to assert their support for the woman's right to choose whether or not they must terminate their pregnancy, and by Maine threatening to revoke this protection, the implications of the bill would extent far beyond what seems to be the direct impacts. Wealthier residents would be able to travel out of state to seek the medical care they need, while those who are unable to do so (largely for financial reasons, which is highly relevant to LD 253, which I also oppose) would be forced to carry to term, which for all women is a massive physical burden-- especially in the extenuating circumstances that would warrant the pursuit of an abortion-- as well as a crushing financial burden. If Maine votes to criminalize abortion, this will widen wealth inequalities that are already present in the state. If the Maine government truly seeks to act in the best interest of it's residents, it will seek to protect a woman's right to terminate her pregnancy if that is what she decides is best for her.

The audacity to deem a life-saving procedure criminal is astounding. Rape and incest are devastating circumstances and no victim should be abridged from the option to terminate a pregnancy that is a consequence from sexual abuse. No deeply personal and health-oriented decisions should be dictated by the government.

As an incoming freshman at Bowdoin College, I hope that my future is protected by my state government, not jeopardized. If I, for any unforeseen circumstance, find myself in the position where I need to seek reproductive care while attending the College in the next four years, I truly hope that I will be able to do so. If not, I would have to quit my college sport as I am an athletic recruit to the college. I would have to find housing that accommodates not only myself but a baby, too. I would have to find a way to afford being a mother at 18, 19, 20-- while also being a full-time student who is already paying extensive college bills. I understand that those in objection of the woman's right to choose pride themselves on being pro-life, but I urge the government to consider the detriments of having to be a mother before I am prepared to. That is not pro-life for me or the baby. That is pro-sacrifice, pro-economic struggle, pro-loss of opportunity. That is the consequence of a government attempting to control aspects of life that it truly has no business regulating at all. If the government really cares about the lives it seeks to protect, wouldn't it find it more useful to protect the conditions of life for those actually living? The Republican party is pro-life until the baby is actually born.

I also recognize and agree with the reality that abortion is not ideal. It truly is not. But making it illegal is not going to change the fact that it is circumstantially necessary. If lawmakers genuinely prioritize reducing abortion, they would expand contraception, comprehensive sex education, affordable childcare and maternal healthcare. This bill effectively achieves none of that. I urge you to reject this cruelty. There are circumstances in which a woman does not choose to become pregnant. Why should she then sacrifice the right to decide what to do about the pregnancy?

I urge you as lawmakers to consider the ethical implications of this bill. It is not about the unborn fetus; it never has been. It is about controlling women. Please take this opportunity to prove to your constituents that you do in fact prioritize the health and safety of the women of Maine. The government has no place in personal medical decisions. Let people make these choices with their doctors, their families and their own conscience—not with politicians.