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Scarborough, Maine

April 28, 2025

Re: LD 1716, An Act to Require Family Life Education to Include a Human Growth and Development Curriculum

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and Honorable Members of the Joint Health and Human Services Committee

I appreciate this opportunity to address you on this important matter. My name is Anne Gallaudet. I am a resident of Scarborough, Maine. I am writing *in opposition of* LD 1716.

This bill's title leaves off its most important element. We need to turn to the definition section in the draft legislation to find the true intent of this bill as it is only here that we see the **CRITICAL MODIFIERS** *inexplicably* missing from the title. The definition section makes clear that this bill is focused SOLELY on human growth and development related to *pregnancy and human development inside the uterus*.

FURTHER, LD 1716 mandates that human growth and development discussion must be offered to students beginning no later than grade 3 and any discussion **must** include:

- A. A high-definition ultrasound video, at least 3 minutes in duration, showing the fetal development of the brain, heart, sex organs and other vital organs in early fetal development, and
- B. A video showing the process of fertilization and every stage of fetal development inside the uterus and noting significant markers of cell growth and organ development of the fetus from conception to birth.

And, lastly, the proposers of this bill find the bill's narrow intent so integral to educational process that it authorizes the Attorney General to **bring civil suit** to enforce the provision (and against whom – our public-school teachers and public educational system???)

Importantly, this bill does not address any other aspect of human development. It ignores the many complexities of pregnancy, the natural abortions that occur and then the right to abortion. The bill ignores the pregnant person themselves and their needs to achieve healthy well-being in a safe manner while pregnant and when no longer. To be clear, it does not address human development outside the womb from birth to old age.

Moreover, it does not mandate any specific educational standards to be adhered.

The sole focus is **on showing videos** defined with inordinate specificity is intentional because the right to life movement wants all schools to show a highly controversial

video – Baby Olivia – to advance a political religious message in public education. I note that the Baby Olivia video has been described as a fake, manipulative, ultrasound video that depicts fetal development in an extraordinarily inaccurate and notoriously unscientific manner.

Indeed, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has stated that the video is not aligned with scientific fact and may manipulate emotions rather than offer evidence-based information. The ACOG emphasizes the importance of science in reproductive health policies and medical decision-making as should and does the State of Maine.

Although the bill does not specifically mandate the Baby Olivia video, nonetheless, it is crafted in a way to pressure teachers to select it. That is because teachers already are managing an excessive number of tasks every single day with limited resources and if they choose to substitute a different video, it will be incredibly difficult to easily identify a substitute given the specificity in the bill. The bill is patently designed to ensure the Baby Olivia video meets these unnecessary, onerous and politically driven mandates.

This bill's real intent is to grow and promote anti-abortion sentiments through its propaganda which is against Maine public policy. No one in their right mind can honestly think in wanting to ensure healthy well-being in our youth, that the one priority, which should in fact be enforced by the Attorney General, is that they need to see an ultrasound video – especially one as manifestly distorted as Baby Olivia or its kind.

Abortion is legal in Maine. This bill's intent is to manipulate the minds of young people to be antiabortion, stigmatize people receiving abortions, and ultimately deny women the right to scientifically supported reproductive health care. I believe there is no defensible State interest in this bill.

We have lost our communal empathy for others; we are wrong to be judgmental of our neighbors' lives.

Thank you for your considering my comments. Please vote "ought not to pass" on LD 1716.

Anne Gallaudet
Scarborough, Maine