



Testimony before the Committee on Judiciary - May 18, 2021

**LD 825 An Act To Ensure Equality in Women's Health Care Access in Maine
by Requiring Facilities Providing Abortions To Inform Patients of Options
and Alternatives**

LD 851 An Act To Ensure Women Are Informed of Abortion Pill Reversal

Senator Carney, Representative Harnett and Members of the Committee:

I am Rev. Jane Field, a resident of Portland (and your constituent, Senator Sanborn), and an ordained Presbyterian (PCUSA) minister. I am the Executive Director of the Maine Council of Churches which has seven member-denominations (Episcopal, Lutheran (ELCA), Presbyterian (PCUSA), Quaker, Unitarian Universalist, United Methodist and United Church of Christ) who represent 437 local congregations in Maine with 55,000 members statewide.

The Maine Council of Churches **opposes** LD 825 and LD 851.

I am likely not the only Christian you will hear from today. I respect the right of those Christians who support these bills to be here representing *their* interpretation of Christianity. But *their* interpretation is not mine, nor is it that of the Maine Council of Churches. My own denomination has advocated for reproductive choice and justice since 1970, *before* Roe v. Wade, understanding the termination of a pregnancy to be a matter of a careful ethical decision by the patient that should not be restricted by law. We affirm the ability of women to make good moral choices and believe the decision to end a pregnancy can be such a choice.

Abortion is a complex health care and moral issue requiring nuanced medical, ethical and spiritual discernment in each unique situation. A wide diversity of experiences, opinions, and beliefs related to abortion exist among people of faith in all religious traditions—including the 55,000 church members in our denominations. But neither we, as “the Church,” nor you, as the government, have the wisdom or authority to decide what is best for a woman in an individual situation when she is considering abortion.

The unprecedented number of anti-abortion bills coming before the 130th legislature are part of a backlash to the success of reproductive rights legislation here in Maine in 2019 and are aimed at decreasing access to abortion while increasing the stigma of judgment and shame that some wish to place on women making legal and ethical decisions for their own reproductive health care. These bills disproportionately affect low-income Mainers and Mainers of color.

LD 825 and LD 851 seek to force medical professionals to disseminate information to patients about a procedure that has no basis in medical science and that could, in fact, be harmful to women if attempted (so-called “reversal” of a medication abortion). Facts are important, especially when discussing the health of Maine’s women. Claims regarding abortion “reversal” treatment are not based on science and do not meet clinical standards. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists does not support this procedure. Yet, politicians are pushing legislation to require physicians to recite a script that a medication abortion can be “reversed” and to steer women to this care. Such unfounded legislative mandates represent dangerous political interference and compromise patient care and safety. Neither politicians (nor church leaders) should mandate treatments or require that physicians tell patients inaccurate information.

For these reasons, the Maine Council of Churches urges you to vote “OUGHT NOT TO PASS” on LD 825 and LD 851.