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**Testimony in Support:
LD 616, "An Act to Protect Health Care Professionals Providing Reproductive Health Care Services"
May 1, 2023**

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services, Maine Family Planning is testifying today in support of LD 616, "An Act to Protect Health Care Professionals Providing Reproductive Health Care Services."

The 2022 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* upended 50 years of legal precedent that established a constitutional right to abortion across the country. Since that ruling, a web of chaos has settled on the states, with anti-abortion judges and politicians imposing draconian laws that punish both patients and healthcare providers. Patients are being needlessly brought to the brink of death as hospitals consult with their legal teams about whether administering life-saving care will run them afoul of state abortion laws.^{1,2} International networks are working to keep access to abortion a reality for women and pregnant people in all 50 states. And through it all, health care providers just want to provide evidence-based, patient-driven health care.

LD 616 would help to ensure that Maine health care providers are protected by law to practice evidence-based medicine without fear of malicious litigation from bad actors that would seek to weaponize out-of-state legislation to punish providers in states like ours where abortion is protected. This legislation is sadly essential in a post-Dobbs country where states are battling against one another in the courts. From a practical perspective, we cannot afford to lose qualified health care professionals at a time when we are facing a critical health care worker shortage.³ Protecting providers from these types of malicious, politically motivated lawsuits sends an important message that we support and trust health care providers, and that we have their backs.

Even before the ruling in *Dobbs*, the novel legal device employed by Texas's SB 8 showed how far anti-abortion ideologues are willing to go in order to advance their unpopular agenda, using bounties to incentivize citizens to pursue legal action against abortion providers and those perceived as aiding and abetting an abortion. Protecting our health care providers, and by extension the patients and communities they serve, is a vital and urgent legislative action required in this moment. We urge the committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 616. Thank you.

¹ [Texas woman denied an abortion tells senators she 'nearly died on their watch' | CNN](#)

² [Woman who needed abortion told to wait in parking lot until she's 'crashing': Shots - Health News : NPR](#)

³ [Maine's health care workforce shortage is exacerbated by the state's demographics | Maine Public](#)