

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, I'm Alivia Kennedy and I live in Portland. I'm here in support of LD 935.

I have been in dangerous and unpredictable situations my entire life. I was around parties, drugs and domestic abuse from the time I was in the womb. I watched my mother struggle with intimate partner violence, substance use, and mental illness for most of my childhood before moving in with my father. Experiencing generational trauma has resulted in ongoing physical and mental health struggles, including birth defects, persistent pain, and symptoms of my mental illnesses.

Throughout my youth I felt like the options to choose were often taken from me. I ran away many times in an effort to take back my control. I would often make risky and impulsive decisions, and trust people who did not have my best intentions at heart. I survived sex trafficking, sexual abuse, and exploitation by the age of 14.

At 17 I found myself locked into a cycle of unpredictable violence. I was pressured into having a child by my partner at the time. He convinced me to not have an abortion. I did everything I could to create a safe environment for my son, and was able to secure an open adoption for him to keep him safe. I did not escape that relationship for almost 3 years, and survived a world where I was constantly fearing for my life with him.

I traveled the country after leaving him, cycling between substance use, abusive relationships, and suicide attempts. I moved back to Maine when I was 20, to go to college for a degree. I had hopes to become a better activist for human rights, get my degree, and continue to travel again one day. I wanted to live close to my son in California, and develop a stronger bond with him and his family. I wanted to give myself another opportunity to create stability in my life that I had not yet had.

In the dorms I used methamphetamine and heroin to help cope with my depression, and achieve academically. My stress responses, reactions and time management were unpredictable, as I was still dabbling in chaos. I became pregnant, and felt the similar social pressures from the time I was pregnant as a teenager.

I briefly considered giving birth, because I felt like that was my fault for being pregnant. I felt that I needed to based on general societal beliefs. I knew that I could not mentally or emotionally provide a healthy, sustainable life for a child. I also just did not want to be a mother yet. I wanted to have my own apartment, abstinence from substances, discover mental wellness, and navigate my options for future careers. I knew my goals and responsibilities were meant to be fulfilled and that I was capable of being an excellent mother at a different time. I had the abortion with help from funding through Planned Parenthood. I did not have money, transportation, or resources besides a ride back to the dorm from a friend. My father was there to support me emotionally, which I am very grateful for.

Because I was able to postpone a major life change at that time, I was able to create a more sustainable life for myself. I was able to decide when I was ready to have a child after my abortion. I have the ability to provide a life for him, that I was not able to have myself growing up. My two children visit each other across the country annually. I am a caseworker now, working with folks who have experienced hardships like my own. I believe that it is everyone's right to have access to health care. Preventing people from having an abortion harms pregnant people and their families.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 935. Thank you.