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Maine Family Planning
Testimony in Opposition to
LD 1197, LD 494, LD 771, LD 1249, and LD 1614
May 5, 2023

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Laura Harper and I am testifying today on behalf of my client, Maine Family Planning

It is unconscionable that we are facing more than half a dozen anti-abortion bills this session. Post-Dobbs, approximately 22 million women and girls of reproductive age in the US now live in states where abortion access is heavily restricted and often totally inaccessible. These bans and restrictions fall hardest on Black, Indigenous, Latina, and immigrant women, further harming their reproductive health at a time when we are facing a maternal mortality crisis in this country. It is immoral and outrageous that in this moment of crisis, some Maine legislators are bringing forward bills that would stigmatize and restrict access to this essential reproductive health care.

In the words of Dr. Ana Langer, a physician specializing in pediatrics and neonatology and leader of the Women and Health Initiative at Harvard's T. H. Chan School of Public Health, "Numerous international and regional human rights treaties and national-level constitutions around the world protect the right to safe and legal abortion as a fundamental human right. Access to safe abortion is included in a constellation of rights, including the rights to life, liberty, privacy, equality and non-discrimination, and freedom from cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment."

The bills we are testifying against today are not grounded in evidence-based medicine or science. They are not concerned with the lives of pregnant people and their families. Their objective is to limit access to abortion. And restricting access to abortion denies people the human right to bodily autonomy, traps people in poverty, and perpetuates cycles of abuse and violence against women.

The decision of whether to continue a pregnancy is deeply personal. Many factors contribute to people's decisions, including financial, social, and health conditions, as well as individual belief systems. The only role that the state should have in these deeply personal decisions is protecting an individual's right to make them, and ensuring meaningful support for whatever decision they make, whether that's abortion or birth, adoption or parenting.

On behalf of the reproductive health experts at Maine Family Planning, I urge you to reject LD 1197, LD 494, LD 771, LD 1249, and LD 1614.