

Katherine Parker
530 Rand Rd
Industry Maine
May 1st 2023

Thank you for listening to us today, members of the committee. My name is Katherine Parker but I am more known as Kate Harding. I am a working woman in the small town of Skowhegan. I am entirely opposed to LD 1619.

There was a time in my life I was convinced I had lost everything that had ever been important to me. I was depressed and convinced nothing good was going to come out of my life. I was moments away from making the biggest mistake of my life when my phone lit up with a snapchat facetime from one of my oldest friends. Quickly drying my tears, I answered with a smile. An ear was in front of the camera with a voice explaining that it was a facetime so the phone wasn't supposed to be in front of one's ear. I laughed realizing I had been called by my young godson so he could tell me that he had finally been able to use the restroom by himself without help from an adult. My head cleared when I heard his small voice and seeing his goofy toddler smile. He asked me if I was coming to his fourth birthday party. I had informed him I wouldn't miss it for the world.

Four years ago, I had sat in the car with his father in front of the Skowhegan family planning. He was seventeen and I was fourteen. I had been volunteering with first choice pregnancy center for as long as I could remember, that day my old friend, let's call him John, had reached out to me because his girlfriend had adamant on getting an abortion. In the years that I had known John, I had never seen him so distraught. He jumped up when he saw his nine weeks pregnant girlfriend, we'll call her Mary, pull into the parking lot. After a moment him begging her not to go through with it. Mary uttered the horribly false claim "It's just a clump of cells." I decided it was my time to step in. I placed a small but completely accurate model of a ten week old fetus in her hand. The model had tiny hands, feet, mouth and a small barely developed nose. At that point the baby is barely two inches long, but it looks distinctly human at that point all the same. Nobody that is in their right mind could determine that a nine to ten week old preborn child is a child upon seeing them. Seeing that model, Mary was now convinced to at least get an ultrasound before she made a final decision. I skipped school to go with her the next week to an ultrasound at Maine General in Waterville. Mary's jaw dropped upon hearing her son's heartbeat for the first time. The small sound filled the silent room and my heart. I assured her that if at any time she felt she could not handle the responsibility, I would take her son in as my own.

Mary unfortunately left shortly after giving birth to a set of twins a little less than a year ago. John settled down with his three children, remarried and soon after discovered that he was going to be a father once again to a fourth precious miracle. They are happy and thriving under the care of myself, John and their new stepmother that loves them more than life itself. I have a dog tag on my keyring engraved with their names in my pocket.

Three lives could have been lost that day. Women who have abortions are more likely to have spontaneous miscarriages in future pregnancy. Meaning the two other children Mary brought into the world would have been at risk as well.

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LD 1619 allows for abortions to be preformed up to forty weeks gestation with a physicians recommendation for any reason whatsoever. It also eliminates any retaliation against those who obtain illegal abortions. This law is dangerous, anti-woman, and anti-child. No one talks about the effects of abortion both mental and physical. One decision can change the entire course of someone's life. My life was saved in turn by the one I saved years ago. The decision this committee makes could save thousands of lives and change millions. That is all, Thank you.