

**TESTIMONY LD 1619 – May 1, 2023**

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I am grateful for the opportunity to be able to speak at this Public Hearing with the Judicial Committee in defending the right to life from conception to natural death.

After 50 years of living out of state, I returned to Maine 7 years ago to be closer to my siblings. I realized then what beauty we have in Maine with the distinct changes in seasons and being surrounded with the beauty of Mother Nature in all its natural forms and creatures. I am proud to be living in this pristine state.

However, when Governor Mills surprised us with the announcement that contrary to her campaign promises she was now promoting a new bill which would support the expansion of abortion to birth! In other words, legislation would allow abortion of full-term babies for any reason.

I gasped at the thought that our beautifully pristine State of Maine could now become known primarily as “the killing state”, inviting all women with open arms to abort their innocent child, even up to their due date, for any reason whatsoever. This would happen without any defense for protecting the life of this baby who is safe and comfortable in his or her mother’s womb. We would become one of only six states that have this extreme legislation! I ask, WHY?

What rights are we defending and for whom? Are we defending a woman’s reproductive rights allowing her to decide if she wishes to terminate an unwanted pregnancy for any reason, such as inconvenient timing, financial issues, relationship with the father, etc.? On the other hand, Is there any consideration of defending the innocent life of the unborn child who is at a stage ready and able to live outside the mother’s womb? I wonder, are we looking at the right to KILL or the right to LIVE. Whose freedom are we protecting?

Mistakes happen. No one is exempt from that, however, when a mistake occurs, we must seek solutions and there are many options available to an expectant mother. Today we have pregnancy centers which provide many services for the mother and child, and adoption in providing the baby with a loving family. Let us make these options known and accessible to the expectant mother so that she is not forced to make a hasty decision that she may regret for the rest of her life.

In closing, I urge you to please vote NO to support the expansion of abortion to birth!

Thank you.