

Senator Carney and Representative Moonen, Honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Sheila Murphy and I'm a resident of Brunswick. I'm here to testify in opposition to LD 1619. I am testifying for two reasons.

First, I am the mother of a child born prematurely. In the third trimester, I already felt I was beginning to get to know my son as he was active in the womb. It was clear to me he was a person. When he was born early, he was viable and he survived and thrived. He is now about to begin medical school and plans to serve as a family practice doctor in an urban neighborhood clinic. He's the kind of person that was born to do good. I cannot imagine life without him.

Second, we can do so much better than this bill. A mother to be carrying a child during the third trimester knows her child to some degree. It is widely understood that a woman only has an abortion when she feels she has no other option. Mainers are smart, creative, ingenious people. Surely we can put our minds to the task of creating better options for a woman than to do violence to her own body and that of her unborn, viable child.

Whether or not people think abortion should be legal, no one believes abortion is a good thing to do. Let's stop making it so easy for women to do something no one thinks is a good thing to do. Let's believe in the strength of women and let's find better ways to support them when they feel like their out of options.

Third and finally, the law teaches. If we have a law that protects the killing of a third trimester baby in the womb, we are saying a child in the womb has no intrinsic value. If the mother wants to give birth, then the bay has value. If the mother wants to abort, then the baby has no value. It is easy to see that when the value of a baby is simply a matter of opinion, there is no real value. Our law would teach our children, our citizens, that a third trimester child in the womb is worthless. No one believes this or wants this.

Please use your reason, and oppose LD 1619.