

TESTIMONY OF Jeffrey Polland of Otisfield, ME requesting ought NOT to pass on LD 1619

An Act to Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, greetings. My name is Jeffrey Polland of Otisfield and I wish to bring to your attention concerns that I have with LD 1619 as it is currently written.

The title of LD 1619 implies that its intent is to address existing concerns regarding patient privacy. I do not have any knowledge regarding these privacy issues but if privacy is a legitimate concern, then I would agree that appropriate steps could be taken to rectify how abortions are reported.

My concerns begin with the fact that LD 1619 and its title imply one thing when, in reality, the implications of this bill would allow for something totally different. As you are aware, Maine law and policy **already provides for the legal right for a woman to choose abortion** before a baby can live viably outside of the womb. Existing Maine law also protects the health of all Maine women beyond the viability of a baby if a woman's life or health is in danger. While I personally do not support a woman's right to choose abortion in a general sense, existing Maine policy and law already affords Maine women the right to choose abortion within certain limits or boundaries.

Beyond the "privacy" concerns, LD 1619 enters unacceptable territory by removing the boundaries of existing Maine law. Allowing any licensed physician to determine if a woman's life or health is in danger due to pregnancy effectively changes laws and policies so that any woman can receive an abortion at any time right up until the time of a child's birth. All reasonable and healthy boundaries will disappear. Readily available data in standard medical publications and conversations with qualified ob/gyn doctors reveal that **all pregnancies** pose a life or health risk for women. An argument can easily be made at **any point in any pregnancy** that a woman's life or health is at risk.

All healthy civilized free societies have laws protecting and providing freedoms to its citizens. It is also recognized that their laws have and need boundaries. When all boundaries are stripped from the law of the land in the name of one group's rights or freedoms, then someone else's rights and freedoms are lost. In the case of LD 1619, healthy viable babies are the ones who lose.

If we are all honest with each other, existing Maine law and policies are not preventing a woman's right to choose abortion prior to a baby's ability to live outside the womb. A woman's right to abortion due to health and/or threats to her life are also extended to all women in Sec. 2 of 22 MRSA 1598.

Furthermore, existing Maine law regarding abortions also provides penalties for those who choose not to follow the rules. This is another common, necessary, and healthy boundary often seen in a government's laws and policies. LD 1619 seeks to remove all penalties for people who perform abortions outside of the scope of recognized Maine law. Such a move causes one to question the ulterior motives of this proposed bill and further endangers the lives of Maine women and babies.

In conclusion, I respectfully ask the Judiciary Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass with regards to LD 1619.

Very sincerely,

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