

Senator Carney and Representative Moonen, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Julie Whitehill and I am a resident of Norway, Maine. I am here to testify in opposition to LD1619.

All medical procedures have inherent risks and abortion is a medical procedure that obviously takes the life of a developing child, and sometimes the mother. Abortion in the last trimester of a pregnancy has increased risks to the mother.

Abortion is a violent invasion of the uterus that leaves a mother at risk of perforation of the uterus, bladder or bowel, infection, sepsis, or hemorrhage.

In the later stages of pregnancy, the child is larger, and the abortion process is more complicated. It increases the potential of permanent damage to the mother's reproductive organs including infertility, inability to carry a future pregnancy to term, low birth rate and of course there is greater risk of the woman's life itself. We know women have died at the hands of abortionists since the beginning of Roe.

Abortion leaves scars in other areas of life as well. There is a 65% increased risk of depression, abortive women are twice as likely to be hospitalized for psychiatric illness within six months of the abortion or need outpatient psychiatric care. There is an increased likeliness of generalized anxiety disorder including post-traumatic stress disorder, nightmares, eating disorders, and panic attacks. Worse is the increase in suicide ideation and an 154% increased rate of suicide as compared to the general population after abortion. Some of these symptoms may not be present until years later.

A quick Google search entering "abortion" and "grief" listed 19 different organizations available to assist women with their grief, clearly indicating a need.

Taking the life of a preborn child is a grievous thing. These children deserve a chance at life. This child that is aborted is not like discarding wisdom teeth. Past viability it is infanticide. Once a mother feels the child moving in her womb, there is no mistaking that a live child resides there. I suggest that passing this bill will, not only obviously take the life of a viable baby but also the heart and spirit of a woman. Both deserve better. Women need help, support, compassion at this time in their lives.

There are at present many organizations within Maine that offer pregnancy support from confirmation of pregnancy to after the baby is born and the mother can take care of herself and her child. I was involved in the creation of such a pregnancy care center as this 36-years ago and it continues to function successfully today.

Truly caring for women in a difficult time with an unplanned pregnancy is to offer her help and hope. Pregnancy care centers are trained to offer it. Abortion creates more long-term problems than solves them. There is really no need for abortion in this state, much less one that promises to be one of the most extreme laws in the country.

Please vote Ought Not to Pass this bill.