

Good afternoon Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary.

At 22 weeks pregnant, and as the mother of a busy toddler, I am here today to argue for the lives of other sweet babes, yet to be born.

It is my understanding that this bill would allow for abortions in the State of Maine, up to nine months, when deemed "necessary" by a licensed physician. The bill does not expand on what would qualify as a "necessary" abortion. Given that Maine already allows for abortions past "viability" when the life of the mother is at serious risk, my guess is that it likely refers to a time when the child would be born with significant medical needs. Through my employment as a social worker, I have regularly interacted with these exact children. I have encountered children who are wheelchair bound, children who are blind in one eye or both, have feeding tubes, breathing tubes, are nonverbal, and other children who will never expand their mental capacity above that of a toddler. Many of these have spent significant time in foster system, sometimes requiring extensive medical care from the time of birth due to exposure to illegal substances in the womb. To look at these children at birth, it can be daunting to think of the road ahead of them, whether they are going through the painful experience of withdrawal, or simply contemplating the many obstacles they will have to overcome given their physical and/or mental delays.

As sad as their stories may be, I have never once looked at any of them, and considered that they might be unworthy of life. Sometimes, these children do not even know that anything is "wrong with them." Despite their limitations, they are capable of joy. They love to play, they form emotional bonds to their caregivers, and have determined mind sets. Even when their own parents are not able to care for them, they are loved, they are wanted, and they are fought for.

This bill is bad for future children, who may never be given the opportunity to take their first breath if it passes. The State of Maine works hard to protect vulnerable children and these should be no exception. I am very aware that they require precious time, energy, and resources on a family and community level. That does not mean they deserve death.

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts, and for your service to the State of Maine. I greatly hope that if you were planning to vote in favor of LD 1619, you would reconsider and vote against it.

Hannah Allen

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