

Testimony of Susan Dench in Opposition to LD 1619

"An Act to Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws"

My name is Susan Dench and I live in Portland, Maine. My husband is an adopted child born to a young college student in Massachusetts in 1949. We have three adopted children, one born in Bangor, one born in Delhi, India, and one in Dallas, Texas. **I am testifying in opposition to Governor Mills's proposal to eliminate viability restrictions on the practice of abortion in Maine**, which she proposes in violation of campaign promises to leave current law as it stands. Governor Mills and her allies appear to be obsessed with assuring that Maine has the most extreme anti human life abortion laws in the country.

The bill proposed by Governor Mills and her allies changes one line in the current statute so as to eliminate any practical limits on abortions right up to the moment of a live birth. The operative portion of the bill is as follows:

After viability an abortion may be performed only when it is necessary ~~to preserve the life or health of the mother~~ in the professional judgment of a physician licensed pursuant to Title 32, chapter 36 or 48.

Thus as long as a willing doctor can be found, an abortion can be done at any time, whether or not for medical reasons.

So-called pro-choice advocates make the false argument that women can do whatever they want with their own bodies. They should have an absolute right to choose whether to complete a pregnancy. Just a hair of common sense refutes this argument. Why? Because before a woman becomes pregnant, she has already made a "choice" to have sex, knowing that naturally and biologically sex aims at conception. It's designed to produce pregnancies. Therefore, a certain ethical responsibility attaches to it. When a pregnancy follows it is no longer only the woman's body involved, but also another human body, genetically and biologically separate from the pregnant woman. This changes the "choice" argument. To say that now a pregnant woman is free to destroy, free to kill, the human being she has conceived at her discretion is not "choice," it's unscientific, immoral and unethical.

This becomes even clearer when the unborn child within has reached the stage of viability, capable of surviving outside the mother's womb. Governor Mills is determined that such viable babies shall not live. How ironic this is, when only a few weeks ago we were celebrating here in Maine the survival in good health of a baby born at 22 weeks, lower actually than is most often considered an age of viability. See <https://www.wmtw.com/article/maines-youngest-baby-born-22-weeks/43454149>. Governor Mills and her friends would be perfectly happy if that baby had been killed by late abortion.

The unfortunate case of Dana Peirce, who traveled to Colorado for a late term abortion in 2019, is the Governor's pretext for reneging on her campaign statement of October 4, 2022, that she would not try to change Maine law if elected. It appears Mills surely knew about the Peirce family, whose story was well known, before she was elected, see <https://www.pressherald.com/2022/11/01/maine-voices-our-state-is-not-immune-to-attacks-on-abortion-access/>.

The actual legislation bears no relationship to the kind of rare medical condition that prompted Mrs. Peirce's abortion. The basis for the change, like the dishonest title of the LD itself, shrouds the Governor's real intent in mendacity. The real intent is overturning 30 years of Maine legal experience to make Maine an abortion haven where no unborn baby is safe until born alive. The Governor's obsession with abortion (forbidding cooperation with the laws of other states, stockpiling abortion drugs, making Maine an abortion destination) is unscientific, extreme and wicked.