

My name is Becky Stephens. I am a lifelong Mainer now living in Waldoboro.

I have worked virtually all of my adult life in Physical Therapy, and I have heard from countless women their own regrets from having made decisions to abort their children for their own personal reasons. Regrets I wish they did not have. Regrets that cause them to shed tears years, in some cases decades, later. I cried with and for them.

But today I want to talk to you about my own experience. You see my experience and similar experiences for many of my friends and family are the excuse being used to propose LD1619 in the first place. The excuse that those with medical needs cannot have those needs met in Maine. And typical of politicians with less than transparent intentions additional language is added to a bill. In this this case to remove viability. To remove risk to the mother's health. To remove medical necessity. To remove the doctor.

You see, when I was 23, I found myself pregnant for the 4th time. I had a prior miscarriage and two healthy children. My miscarriage "spontaneous abortion" was sad. But what I was to go through with this 4th pregnancy was heart-wrenching. My baby died. Around 23 weeks gestation. I was given the option to wait for my body to go into labor or to seek induction. Some would have you believe without the passing of LD1619 what I was offered would be illegal.

That is a fabrication designed to elicit sympathy for grieving parents who face unthinkable circumstances. Misplaced sympathy that will result in atrocities against the most vulnerable in our society.

Not one person looked at my situation as anything but tragic. That is the same response for women who have had molar pregnancies and need a DNC or those with ectopic pregnancies who need surgical intervention to save their life while ended the viability of a pregnancy. Those circumstances are unimaginable until you are in them. And medical advances mean I am alive, not dead from infection. My multiple friends who have had ectopic pregnancies are alive and not dead when their fallopian tube ruptured.

LD1619 is not needed. I am alive. Those women are alive. They are here in Maine. Their procedures were done in Maine by caring Maine doctors.

I ask you as a woman. As a mother. As a grandmother. As a healthcare provider. Do not sacrifice women and do not sacrifice viable children.

LD1619 ought not to pass.