

Senator Carney and Representative Moonen, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Karen Mallory. My husband and our family are residents of Glenburn, ME. I am here to testify in opposition to bill LD 1619.

My husband and I are the proud parents of twin boys who are now 5 years old. Sadly, our boys began their lives in the worst of ways. At around 22 weeks into my pregnancy, we learned that our boys were suffering from a life-threatening condition. Despite an in-utero procedure that attempted to correct this condition, it progressed. In fact, it progressed to the point that our boys were born by emergency C-Section at 26 weeks. In my hands, I am holding a picture of each boy that was taken literally moments after they were born. This is what life looks like at 26 weeks. While still in the NICU and within days of their birth, we could already see differences in their personalities. Within days of their birth, we could tell that one of them would be left-handed, while the other was right handed. Remember, they should have still been in my womb. And even at 24 weeks, when I had the in-utero procedure, the doctor told us that one of the boys tried to play with the instruments being inserted into my placenta. She said that the entire medical staff in the operating room was laughing at his playful gestures. He was only 24 weeks old.

These are pictures of what our sons look like today. They are healthy, thriving 5 year old boys who are full of abundant life. Literally every day, I thank God that they survived their traumatic birth. It is a joy and a privilege for my husband and I to raise them.

I am their mom. I was their mom when they were first formed in my womb. I was their mom when they were born at 26 weeks. I will be their mom when they're 26 years old... and beyond. Nothing can change that. But these two boys were not given life by me, but rather by their Creator. He alone decided the day they were born. He alone will decide when they take their last breath. Being their mom in no way gives me the right to make that decision. I don't have the right to take their precious life from them today. I had no right to take their life from them when they were in my womb.

I urge you in the strongest sense to look again at these pictures of life at 26 weeks. I also urge you to protect some of the most vulnerable citizens of the state of Maine....the unborn. Please vote no on this bill. Thank you.