

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

My name is Randy Gauvin from Farmington, and I stand opposed to L. D. 1619. I have known Janet Mills for many years and have long respected her even before she became Governor. So I find myself disheartened and disappointed by this bill and the reasons for her wanting this. I find it hard to believe that her only goal is to push an abortion agenda regardless of how it will affect the sensible and thoughtful people throughout Maine.

I am a retired physician assistant and prior to this, a paramedic, having a combined career of over 40 years in emergency medicine.

I'm concerned about the terminology, "...an abortion may be performed only when it is necessary in the professional judgment of a physician". This seems strategically vague. What makes an abortion necessary?

Is the impetus for this bill the heart-wrenching story of a family who would have had a baby with severe spinal dysplasia? I have nothing but sympathy for this family and their situation. But as sad as this case is, this condition is rare, occurring only 2.4 times in 10,000 pregnancies. To change the existing law to cover a case like this is to clearly try to justify a calculated overreach; to have Maine become "a shelter from the storm and a beacon of hope" for those seeking abortions across the country, made more frenzied by the repeal of Roe v. Wade, a decision that has had absolutely no affect on the status of abortions in Maine.

What could be done instead? A more realistic approach would be to maintain the current viability status and to avoid an all-or-nothing approach by creating a roster of situations that would qualify for an exemption supporting the individual medical needs of a patient, and which would allow the physician the guidance they would need to make these difficult decisions.

Nowadays, the idea that a medical decision being a private matter between a woman and her provider is overly simplistic. A medical provider needs to consider how a decision would not only impact the lives of their patients, but their own lives, their families, medical practice, office staff, partners, affiliated hospitals, malpractice coverage, and dealing with the increased complexity of insurance companies that pay the bills.

Regardless of the intent, under the new law any woman who wishes to have an abortion for any reason at any time, could simply ask her doctor to sanction it. Realistically, what doctor could find a reason to say no, especially if there are no consequences?

I beg you, please think long and hard before making this decision. Thank you for your time in listening to all of us in what I'm sure is a challenging and thankless task.