

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Cynthia Benner, and I reside in Skowhegan. Today, I am here to testify in opposition to LD1619. I have lived in this state of Maine my entire life. Our coast, mountains, and forests are full of beauty. The waves that crash onto the shoreline, the eagles that glide over mountaintops, and the deer that stroll in the woods are only a few examples of what make our state great. However, human life is the most beautiful and precious gift of all. Maine is not a place where full term babies should be allowed to be slaughtered. It should not happen anywhere.

LD1619 simply cannot pass.

Abortion alone is horrific. It is the end of life and we silence these babies before they're allowed to have a voice or any human rights. But, full term abortion- to kill a baby that can and would live outside the womb, is wrong. There is no gray here, but black and white- right and wrong. And, this is **WRONG!** There is no place for this in our state or anywhere.

My son, Daniel Joseph, should be celebrating his 27th birthday this month, but 28 years ago, on a damp, gray day in October 1995, I took his life. I snuffed it out. I stopped his ever so tiny heart from beating. He would grow no more inside of me. I would never hold him or rock him to sleep. I would never tell him I loved him or hold his little hand.

I don't have time to tell my whole story, but I can tell you this- I found myself dealing with the unthinkable, an unplanned pregnancy. I believed the lies and felt I had no where to turn- I had no other option that made sense. Soon after I learned I was pregnant, I found myself inside the cold, bleak walls of the abortion clinic. Like the other girls, I was quiet, ashamed, embarrassed, and full of dread and fear. There is no talking, smiling, or laughter inside these walls. It is a place of death, blood, pain, and suffering. But, it does not end there. It lives within a woman forever. It never goes away. It's such a nightmare, that many of us try to bury it as deep down as we can, but at times, it will rise up. I still cringe when I hear a baby cry or hear the word abortion. I dream of babies I don't have here on earth. But, I thank God everyday for HIS love and forgiveness and He has made me whole again.

The doctor told me, after I asked what stage of development my baby was, that it was only 6 weeks and it was simply a "blob of jelly". There was no sympathy in his voice. He was as cold as the room itself.

I have thought about what words, sentences, or stories each of you needs to hear to persuade you to vote this cruel bill down. I have prayed about it. I have asked God to give me the words. Our stories, all of our stories will ultimately help determine whether these unborn are given the chance to live and breathe, laugh and play, make friends and become part of our society, or their lives will be ripped away from them, painfully, horrifically, and in unimaginable ways.

Please, I ask you to put aside politics- put aside outside pressure- think of your children and grandchildren- stop and look at the children around you and vote this bill down. It is the right thing to do. Everyone has a right to life. **PLEASE VOTE OUGHT NOT TO PASS.**

Thank you.