

Senator Carney and Representative Moonen, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Beth L. Churchill. I am a resident of Milo, Maine, and I am here to testify in opposition to LD1619.

I want to speak to the harm LD1619 poses to women and our future citizens. As the summary of this document states,

"...this bill removes the criminal penalties for performing an abortion without being licensed as a physician, physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse and for performing an abortion after viability of the fetus when it was not necessary for the preservation of the life or health of the mother."

As a woman, I shudder to think how this legislation might be abused if it becomes law. Removing the consequences from unqualified performers of abortions will remove protections that Maine women deserve: to receive reproductive health services only from qualified health providers.

Without fear of the penalty of the law, who can tell what kinds of harmful situations may arise for vulnerable women? Consider women, young or old, trapped in abusive conditions either in domestic violent relationships or in sex trafficking. Loosely regulated abortion services will provide an open door to allow their abusers to force them to receive procedures they may not wish to receive. What would be more convenient for these kinds of abusers than to eliminate the inconvenience of a pregnancy without running the risk of their victim coming in contact with a mandatory reporter?

Secondly, LD1619 poses harm to our future citizens. Allowing the abortion of a fetus that has reached viability when it is not necessary for the preservation of the life of the mother opens the door to optional termination of human life. We run the risk of needlessly ending lives that will make valuable contributions to our society in the state of Maine.

Current law in Maine already allows abortion for medical necessity in case of stillbirth and ectopic pregnancy.

Please oppose this unnecessary, drastic bill. Thank you.