

LD 1619

LD 1343

Good afternoon, members of the Judiciary Committee, and thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Mindy Woerter, and I live in Durham.

Seven years ago, almost to the day, I decided to have an abortion. It wasn't a decision I expected to make at that point in my life. I was married, already a mother, and desperately hoping to grow my family.

But, after making it through the first trimester, I found out my wanted pregnancy was nonviable due to fetal anomalies incompatible with life. Continuing the pregnancy put my health at risk. I had a daughter at home to take care of, a family who needed me healthy and whole.

I knew I couldn't continue a pregnancy feeling like a ticking time bomb waiting for a miscarriage to happen, wondering if I'd face serious complications like infection, infertility, or even death – all were possibilities. There wasn't a question in my mind. I knew an abortion was the right choice for me.

Even while I mourned that loss, I felt such relief – that I got to decide what was best for myself and my family. And that relief has blossomed into deep gratitude. Without that abortion, I wouldn't have been able to get pregnant again a few months later, and my youngest daughter wouldn't be here today.

She is 5 now, and she has a big heart and a fiery spirit. She loves dragons, drawing, and making up songs. She is her big sister's best friend. This year, she earned her kindergarten class's empathy award. She comes home from school with worms in her pocket that she rescues from the playground, and rocks that she's named. I get to sing her to sleep every night thanks to safe, affordable abortion access.

No one faced with the deeply personal decision of ending a pregnancy should be forced to leave their support systems and travel to find the care they need. No one should have to jump through hoops to get an abortion, while putting their health and their well-being in jeopardy.

No one should be denied this life-saving care because of where they live, how much money they have, or when they receive a heartbreaking diagnosis. And the right to bodily autonomy should not be subject to the whims of the insurance companies or lawmakers, or dictated by arbitrary restrictions designed to control and to punish people capable of pregnancy.

I urge you to support LD 1619 and LD 1343, because everyone in Maine deserves to choose, without interference or barriers or shame, what we do with our bodies. Abortion access is a fundamental human right.

Thank you.