

# ✓ Maine Medical

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TO: Committee on Judiciary  
FROM: Erik Steele, President, Maine Medical Association  
DATE: May 1, 2023  
RE: SUPPORT – LD 1619, An Act to Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws

The Maine Medical Association is Maine's largest professional association representing over 4,300 current and future physicians from all specialties in all practice settings.

We thank the committee for accepting our comments in support on LD 1619, An Act to Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws.

Our position is in full support of ensuring reproductive health care – including access to abortions – is protected.

Existing law provides that women have the right to choose to have an abortion prior to 'viability', or to protect a women's life or health.

LD 1619 ensures that the choice to seek comprehensive reproductive health care will be protected in Maine. Medical decisions should be made only between individuals and their medical clinician(s), based on evidence-based consensus standards of medical care, and not religious views or political positions.

Decisions about medical care – including abortion – are deeply personal and highly complex. They are best made between the patient, and a physician who can provide expert guidance and bound by professional and ethical standards. Deviations from those standards are best addressed through quality practice guidelines set within groups and healthcare organizations, and by medical licensing boards. State medical boards do not restrict or impede any person or entity from filing a complaint against a physician. Anyone can trigger the investigative process that can ultimately prompt a medical board to discipline a physician.

While we have members with differing views on the moral issue of abortion, we have a responsibility to advocate for access to the full scope of medical care for patients. Because of this inherent tension, we focus our advocacy on protecting the physician-patient relationship. This is the context in which these difficult decisions are best made.

We hope committee members are not swayed by scare tactics, misconceptions, or oversimplifications that take the issue away from the complexities and ambiguities that exist in medical care. We feel it is extremely unlikely that the bill as written will result in terminations of late pregnancies that are viable.

Thank you for considering our comments.

The **Maine Medical Association** is a statewide volunteer organization formed in 1853, serving more than 4,300 current and future Maine physicians in all clinical specialties, organizations, and practice settings.