

Luisa Breen, Brunswick, ME
April 28, 2023

LD 1619- An Act To Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws

Governor Janet Mills and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Luisa Breen, and I am a member of the Reproductive Justice Coalition at Bowdoin College. I am here to advocate for LD1619, An Act To Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws.

This bill provides protection and safety for people seeking abortions in Maine. In particular, the criminalization of non-medical providers and the lift of the gestational ban are two aspects that matter most to me.

The bill proposes to remove the criminal statute that prohibits folks who do not have a medical license from assisting a pregnancy termination. While this statute appears to protect individuals who may become pregnant, the reality is that the statute puts pharmacists at risk. Those who offer over the counter medications and sell Plan B could be prosecuted. The Reproductive Justice Coalition collaborated with the Bowdoin health center to provide Plan B to students this fall because we believe that everyone should have access and autonomy in their healthcare. I will continue to fight for this fundamental right that I believe all Mainers, and people everywhere, deserve. People should be allowed to make decisions about their bodies and their health care without being criminalized for making those decisions or helping others make difficult choices.

Continuing along the lines of autonomy, the gestational period as it is written in the current Reproductive Privacy Act sets the cutoff time for viability as twenty four weeks. After this point, abortion becomes illegal for a pregnant person in Maine. Gestational periods provide estimated lengths of pregnancies. Laws should not be based on these estimations. The strict cut-off at twenty four weeks does not allow for pregnant individuals to change their mind later in pregnancy as their circumstances change. One instance that would make this barrier more pronounced is for pregnant people who live in states where abortion is illegal. They may have to travel to Maine to get an abortion, and depending on the travel time and advanced thought, the person might miss the twenty four week gestational boundary. In this case, someone who is disadvantaged through the healthcare system of their home state is further challenged as they seek health and safety in our state of Maine.

I support bill 1619 because I believe in pregnant people's ability to make decisions alongside supporters, with and without medical licenses, as their circumstances change. The elimination of a criminal statute and gestational ban make Maine a more welcoming, safe state. I am grateful to live in a place where I feel safe and supported by representatives such as you all who listen to the needs of Mainers who care about reproductive rights. I urge you to pass LD 1619. Thank you.