

Sara Gilfenbaum - LD 1619 - Support

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Judiciary Committee,  
My name is Sara Gilfenbaum and I am here today to share my story and my support of LD 1619, An Act to Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws, and LD 1343.

My grandmother Polly was a Jewish immigrant. She escaped the pogroms in Russia and came to the US, she made a life for herself and had three children. She also had a heart condition. When she found out she was pregnant with her fourth child, her doctor told her that her pregnancy could endanger her life. This was well before Roe v. Wade, so she had an abortion in her kitchen. I can't imagine how she felt. Was she scared? Did she fear for her safety? I wonder how this was performed and who performed it. In reading accounts of abortion from this time, I marvel at the courage that my Grandmother must have had.

Fortunately she survived. She lived a long life and was able to hold my daughter, her great granddaughter.

Decades later I sought my own abortion. I became pregnant when my husband's vasectomy failed. I had a very different experience. I had excellent care during my abortion. I went to a doctor's office, not far from home. There was no financial burden for my family and that's how it should be for everyone. Abortion care is basic health care.

I would like to end with the following. According to Jewish Law, human life begins at birth, not conception.

The National Council of Jewish Women states the following: "life does not begin at conception under Jewish law. Sources in the Talmud, (the book of Jewish law), note that the fetus is "mere water" before 40 days of gestation. Following this period, the fetus is considered a physical part of the pregnant individual's body, not yet having life of its own or independent rights. The fetus is not viewed as separate from the parent's body until birth begins and the first breath of oxygen into the lungs allows the soul to enter the body." I would like my faith acknowledged in the discussion of abortion as we move forward.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 1619 and LD 1343.

Thank you.