

131 Legislature, Judiciary Committee  
LD 1619 & LD 1343 Testimony  
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Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Judiciary Committee; my name is Dr. Kathryn Sharpless, and I live in Yarmouth, Maine.

As an obstetrician-gynecologist practicing for over 17 years, I help people decide if, and when, to have children. I see my patients through pregnancies resulting in births, miscarriages, and abortions. Providing abortion care ensures reproductive health and bodily autonomy.

As a practicing OBGYN in Maine, my heart breaks each time I am forced to give pregnant people who need abortion care later in pregnancy a list of out-of-state providers because Maine's current law bans it and includes criminal penalties.

I know many I am forced to turn away won't be able to get the care they need. These are people whose developing pregnancies have fetal anomalies identified later in pregnancy, people who discover they are pregnant later in pregnancy, and people who face obstacles, such as cost or difficulties finding a provider, that delay their abortion care until later in the pregnancy.

Most people who need abortion care later in pregnancy lack the financial resources, transportation, and childcare to leave Maine for care.

People denied an abortion are more likely to live in poverty, be unemployed, and stay in dangerous relationships. They are more likely to experience anxiety, stress, and lower self-esteem compared to people who are able to obtain an abortion. The ban on abortion later in pregnancy in Maine harms pregnant people and their families, especially the most vulnerable, including people living in geographically isolated areas, such as those in many parts of Maine. Every Mainer, no matter where in the state they live, deserves the same access to abortion care.

The ethics of providing an abortion later in pregnancy are the same as early in pregnancy. Supporting pregnant people in obtaining the abortion care they need is trusting pregnant people and their families to decide what is the best course of action based on their individual needs and medical circumstances.

I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1619 and LD 1343.