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LD #1619: An Act to Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws

Governor Janet Mills, House Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross, Senate President Troy Jackson

My name is Kaitlin Weiss and I am a sophomore at Bowdoin College, and originally from Summit, New Jersey. I am here on behalf of the Bowdoin Reproductive Coalition. I am writing for LD #1619: An Act to Improve Maine's Reproductive Privacy Laws.

I am writing in support of LD #1619 because it is a comprehensive and proactive bill that centers the health, safety, and privacy of individuals who seek abortion care. The current Reproductive Privacy Act includes a criminal statute that can be used to prosecute a non-medical provider who assists a pregnant person in terminating their pregnancy. This statute can be used to target anyone who assists someone with self-managing their abortion through abortion pills. According to the Guttmacher Institute: self-managed abortions through medication accounted for 53% of US abortions as of 2020. The Mifepristone Abortion bill was approved by the FDA more than 20 years ago and has been used by more than 5 million people in the United States to safely end their pregnancies. Medication abortion is under attack across the country, and it is imperative that we protect this safe and accessible method of terminating a pregnancy in Maine. The current RPA has language that jeopardizes the safety of those who assist in this safe practice.

LD #1619 also importantly removes the current gestational ban. Removing this ban ensures that each individual is able to make an informed decision with their health care provider. I do not believe anyone would make the extremely difficult and painful decision to terminate a late term pregnancy without necessary cause, and I also do not believe it is my, or anyone's place to define what a necessary cause is. As a college student, I am acutely aware of the disparities in access to transportation on our campus. I personally have access to a vehicle and would be able to travel out of state if I needed to obtain a late-term abortion purely because of economic privilege. Economic privilege should not be the deciding factor in whether an individual must carry a pregnancy to term or not. At a time when reproductive rights are being rolled back across the country, it is essential that Maine remains a state that affirms bodily autonomy and individual agency. I am proud to learn, live, and vote in Maine, and legislation like LD #1619 demonstrates clearly to the people of Maine that our legislature recognizes and affirms our right to choose. I urge you to pass this bill.