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Thank you for the opportunity to speak today re: LD1619.

While in college, I interned with a US Senator, who took his duty seriously representing ALL the people of the state of Iowa. I am now asking you to do the same. On April 11 of this year, Forbes published an article titled, "How Americans Really Feel About Abortion". Just 20% support it during the third trimester. While stats were not broken down by state, it would be quite the statistical anomaly if Maine were above 50%. I urge you to represent ALL Mainers.

Maine's current abortion law represents the best possible compromise to the line in the sand drawn between the pro-choice and pro-life camps. Abortion is legal for any reason up to 24 weeks, and after that for certain exceptions. The story of Erin Wolf is heartbreaking, but current law can be amended to include cases like hers. It has been said that "The best diplomatic agreement is one in which neither side is satisfied." That is where we are in Maine and we ought not to be trying to move the plumb line. Creating public policy when constituents vary widely in their values is not easy. It is true you cannot legislate morality, but legislation creates the boundaries of morality within which a society operates. The language of LD1619 is too permissive and could easily be interpreted to allow abortion for any reason far beyond far beyond viability. Mainers don't want this.

Furthermore, extending the legal limit for abortion would almost certainly increase the risk of mental health issues for pregnant women. A friend of mine had an abortion while she was still dating the man she would later marry. She was not prepared for the depression she would experience--depression around what would have been the due date of her baby, depression around the date she had the abortion. She and her husband went on to have 4 beautiful girls, but the child she chose not to have weighed on her for many years. She was told the whole thing would take a few minutes, she'd receive some pain medicine, and then it would all be over, but it wasn't over, not for her. She got her abortion at 10 weeks. I cannot imagine the risk for mental health issues if the abortion is performed after 24 weeks.

Honestly, I don't know anyone who wants someone else making their healthcare decisions for them and I totally empathize with those who say this decision should be between the patient and the doctor. The thing is, in this scenario, there are two patients in the room with the doctor, and one of them has been deeply marginalized by our society. One of them has no voice. For those of us who believe that all life is precious no matter where it is on the continuum of life, who are part of the community that is the State of Maine, for the sake of women's health, for the sake of the child, please vote no.