

Madam/Mister Chair & Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Lisa Henley and I live in Whitefield, Maine and grew up on the coast in the town of South Bristol, Maine. I am the parent of three children, my oldest born when I was single young woman. I was scared and left alone by the father. I didn't know how I was going to make it on my own and nothing was what I expected for my life. All my plans had been turned upside down, I didn't know which way to turn, and I had the choice to get an abortion or to have my baby. I am testifying today in opposition of LD 1619.

I am testifying because I could have chosen to have an abortion but I did not. I chose to have sex and that resulted in a baby. I could have taken the route to not bring my baby into this world and being left alone for many months by the father I didn't know how I was going to do it. I instead dealt alone with the consequences of my actions and I had to make the choice, to put my baby first or to put myself first. My baby did not ask to be brought into this world. Why would I even consider snuffing out her life for my own?

With her life I was given a new life, a life that saw the beauty through her eyes. I started looking at the world from a new perspective. Later in my pregnancy with every kick within me, with every flutter I found greater purpose in my life, in the life that grew within me. Ultrasound pictures revealed her sucking her thumb, her toes, her fingers, what gender she was. She let me know the foods I ate that she did not like. She kept me up at night with her movement. She kicked my stomach when cramped in the limited space. She heard my voice and she felt my love. At late term she was unique and special, an individual already. Her eyes were green and her hair dark brown. She was alive and dependent on me for her existence first in my womb and then when she was born.

None of it was easy. It was a struggle to care for her, to work, having no significant other to help with decisions, feeding and diaper changes, and finances. But I would never change my decision to value her life above my own because it made me stronger as a woman, and today I have a strong beautiful daughter who has brought my life meaning from the moment she was born till this very day as she prepares here to testify against this bill.

Over 65% of Mainers don't want late term abortion and I am one of them because I know that the world without these babies will suffer a loss-a loss of joy of never knowing them. They will miss out on the rays of sunshine that child could have brought to their lives.

Please side with the over 65% percent of Mainers that don't want late term abortion and give fully formed independent babies a chance to live and change the world for the better just like my daughter has.