

May 1, 2023

Senator Carney and Representative Moonen and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Joan Angelakis. I am a resident of Lewiston Maine. I am here to testify in opposition to LD 1619.

I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. I have counseled women for over 30 years. I am also a trauma therapist and train other professionals how to work with those suffering with trauma.

I come before you today to bring a specific perspective of the trauma that is caused by abortion. I am against this bill because of the continued trauma that abortion causes women... Women who ultimately make the decision to abort their child, or submit to others who want them to have an abortion.

As a clinical therapist, my job is to help people to fully examine all of the content of their own hearts and their own minds regarding the issues that they bring to therapy. I have never spoken to a woman regarding the issue of abortion, prior to or after the abortion, who is not suffering extreme duress with their decision. They are overwhelmed, regardless of their age. They are confused and listen to the many voices telling them what they should do. Many young women have been forced to have abortions by a boyfriend or a parent. Married women, by their husbands or circumstances.

It is very rare that a women would ever want to have an abortion, especially when carrying a child to full term.

The guilt and shame that follows lasts a lifetime. Few ever speak of it again or get counseling for it.

My introduction to abortion was when a classmate in High School shot herself because she had already had an abortion and was facing another abortion.

My next experience was a few years later when a co-worker broke down at work because she had already had 2 abortions and was pregnant again, facing a third. She was being pressured by her boyfriend to have the abortion.

Another experience was a woman I worked with that through counseling who went against the wishes of her husband and decided to have her child. Whenever I would see her in the community, she would thank me and update me about her daughter.

Another experience was a woman who could not move forward with her life because of the trauma of having had 2 abortions, one her mother made her have and another her husband force her to have.

Abortion causes trauma to the mother, the family and the community. It seems like an easy fix for the momentary crisis at the time. But it is pervasive in the functioning of the family. Everyone keeps it as a secret because of the guilt and shame. This does not only come from others, it is an offense of the person's soul that continues to fester, throughout the women's life.

I have NEVER spoken to a woman who felt that they wanted an abortion. They have felt they had to or made to by someone else.

I am not only here to speak up for life, but to advocate for the kind of counsel where a woman discovers for herself, what she really wants, regardless of other people's ideas. THAT is pro-choice.

When a woman is given all the information about her choices... including adoption, the supports available for her to keep her baby... When she sees the life of her child within her womb on an ultrasound or a picture of her child, their little hands, little feet, the features of the baby's face... When she has been presented with all the options available in addition to abortion, then she can make an informed decision for herself and her child... THAT IS PRO-CHOICE!

Thank you for hearing my voice today.

Respectfully,

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