

My name is Bethany Pitcher, and I'm a resident of Livermore, Maine. I'm here to testify in opposition to LD 1619.

When I was 17 years old, I graduated from high school a year early, moved out of my parents' home, in with my boyfriend, and started cosmetology school. I had dreams that when I was finished with school I would move to New York City to be a makeup artist. Later that year I found out I was pregnant.

I was 17, in an extremely toxic relationship, had absolutely no money, and the dreams of my future certainly didn't involve being a teenage mother, so according to our current law and the opinion of many people, including the first doctor I saw, this would have been a perfectly acceptable time to have an abortion.

About 4 months into my pregnancy, my boyfriend, who already had a criminal past, was charged with another crime and we were kicked out of our apartment. So now I was pregnant, broke, and homeless. We bounced from couch to couch for a while but friends were dwindling as not everyone was lining up to be friends with the pregnant teen and her criminal boyfriend. Perhaps this would have been an acceptable time to have an abortion? After all, the baby was not viable and my situation was only getting worse.

Eventually we found someone willing to rent us an old camper to live in. When I was 8.5 months pregnant, I sat in a courthouse, where my boyfriend was convicted of a felony and sentenced to jail. I was not working at this time, and was completely broke, so I was going to need to move out of our tiny camper with my newborn into my sister's basement, alone.

If this bill had been passed then, at that time I would have been able to decide that the terrible circumstances I was in—and they were terrible—was cause enough to abort my baby. Never mind that just 2 weeks later a healthy, seven pound, twelve ounce baby boy was born. A baby that no one would ever dream of harming! Or would they? Is that next? If we can abort minutes before we give birth then why not minutes after? What is the difference? Perhaps that you can see the baby? Hear it?

That baby's name is Jackson and he is now eighteen-years-old. He is graduating from high school next month, he has been on 3 mission trips to Mexico, he is certified in welding, and he is running an already successful landscaping business, all before graduation. He is also the reason that when my boyfriend got out of jail, he committed to changing his life to be the father that Jackson and, later on, our second son deserved. We will have been married for eighteen years this July.

Our lives are full of sacrifice and I have had more than my fair share, but not one of my sacrifices could hold a candle to the sacrifice that is being proposed—the sacrifice of a baby's life. Jackson's life is so incredibly valuable and it always was. Vote ought not to pass.