

TESTIMONY OF JOHN ANTHONY, HARPSWELL, MAINE

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

My name is John Anthony, I reside in Harpswell, and I am here to testify in opposition to L.D. 1619.

I oppose this bill for many of the same objective reasons you have heard already or will hear. Rather than recount them I will briefly address three aspects that make this legislation additionally problematic.

First, we should ask what is the impetus or motivation to craft such an extreme extension of already existing statutes. It is extreme because it crosses the line of viability, the well-acknowledged point when life can sustain itself without aid from the birth host. The impetus cannot be about saving the life of a mother who may be in medical distress, for this contingency is already provided for in existing law. Neither can it be about saving the life of a baby for that life, under this legislation, is permitted to be lawfully terminated. No, this legislation concerns itself with death, not life. Legislation that advances the death of individuals capable of living independently in a medical context is in contradiction to the natural right to enjoy life declared in Article 1, Section 1, of the Constitution of the State of Maine. So the motivation to craft such legislation is not only suspect but reprehensible and an affront to the foundational bases of our government and society.

Second, in the public discourse presently being carried out, people are asking, what becomes of the body or remains of those whose otherwise viable life was terminated? Good question, for it is not clear in this legislation that there are provisions to guard against abuse or even exploitation. Further, due to the advanced stage of pregnancy when life becomes viable, the only method of safely removing the baby may be by inducing birth. At that point, does terminating a life fall under the abortion rubric or is it murder? People are not only concerned but alarmed at these ambiguities and questionable moral legitimacies. The proposed legislation is irresponsibly deficient in addressing them and, from the moral standpoint, may even be unlawful on its face.

Third, it is consistently documented that the majority of the Maine electorate, by almost two to one, opposes extreme expansion of legal abortion allowed by this legislation. Maine legislators are representatives of the people, not of special interests, not of party interests. It is unconscionable that some of them are poised to approve this measure in the face of broad majority popular resistance. This is not an emergency measure; there is ample time for debate. Perhaps this has not occurred because the outcome will corroborate what they already know are the public's predilections.

In summary, this legislation's genesis has shaky constitutional grounds, introduces disturbing and unresolved moral ramifications, and the majority of Maine citizens do not support it. I stand with this Maine majority in opposing it. Please vote ought not to pass.