Senator Carney and Representative Moonen, Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Judith Manchester, a resident of Turner, Maine. I am here to testify in opposition to LD 1619.

I believe that life is sacred right from the point of conception. I realize that there are people in this audience who might disagree with that statement. However, I would like to present to you my view on how abortion not only affects the baby but how it affects the emotional life of the mother. I know women who have had abortions and initially, they feel great relief. They don't have this "problem" any more and can get on with their life. What they didn't realize is that long after the "procedure" was over, they had deep regrets about what they had done, especially as they were raising their other children. For many women, this will haunt them until the day they die.

You see, I have never had an abortion, but I do know what it's like to lose a baby – three, in fact. Yes, three miscarriages. The pain was so intense that I couldn't talk about it and we never told anyone. Finally, after close to a decade of "trying to get over it" we decided to adopt. However, to our dismay, there were very few babies available to adopt and the process was very long.

To make a long story short, we ended up going to China to adopt – twice, in fact. We have since raised two Chinese girls who are the delight of our lives. They are beautiful, smart and have wonderful personalities. Both have graduated from college and are working in their chosen professions. One just got married and of course, we are hoping for a grandchild someday.

There is SO MUCH potential in each human being. Please give these babies a chance at life. Give people like us a chance to be parents and who would raise them in a loving home. Give these women the satisfaction of knowing they did the right thing so they won't be haunted by guilt. It is a win-win situation all around.

I am asking you to carefully consider what I have said today and vote against LD 1619.