

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Rebecca Hinchliffe and I am a resident of Levant. I am here to testify in opposition to LD1619.

The current survival rate of preterm babies in the United States is higher than it's ever been. The survival rate of preterm infants is 78% and babies born after 28 weeks have a 94% survival rate. The fact that you and I are here today is evidence that we were given a chance for life. I'm thankful that we made the cut!

Under Maine's current law, abortion is already legal with provision for medical exceptions up through the ninth month. This bill seeks to expand it to the point of birth, for every baby and every situation - a blank check. This would ensure the right to terminate pregnancies without limitation, for any reason, at any time up to the moment of birth regardless of the condition of the mother even when the baby could survive outside the womb. 2/3 of Mainers disagree with late term abortion. The babies suffer, the parents suffer and anyone who votes for such an extreme and unpopular measure will suffer. Only 5 other states in our country have such an extreme abortion law. Why would Maine want to be the 6th? This is a very unpopular and poorly supported bill.

This bill puts the health and safety of mothers in greater danger by removing criminal penalties for those performing the abortions. The later an abortion is performed, the greater the risk of complications including uterine perforation, scarring, cervical laceration, unplanned hysterectomies, infection, increase in preterm births and additional abortions in subsequent pregnancies, and death. Late term abortions cost 3-4 times that of an early term abortion and require follow-up care and treatment. With increased opportunity for profit and decreased liability of providers, the health and safety of moms will be in jeopardy. This bill brings greater risk to both babies and their mothers. Under any other circumstances, a bill like this would simply be considered bad legislation. As our elected judicial committee members, I urge you to invest your time and energy in creating good legislation that would benefit and protect the people of this great state.

Finally, this bill will bring people to Maine for abortions they are unable to get in their own states which will overburden our already strained healthcare system. A friend's recent visit to the emergency room in Bangor resulted in a 20 hour wait. We cannot afford further strain on our hospitals and limited medical staff. Increased costs for out-of-state abortion seekers could cost millions and would be an overwhelming drain on tax dollars at a time when taxpayers are already struggling with inflation, high gas prices and excessive electricity costs. This bill is bad for babies, bad for moms, and bad for our state. If passed, taxpayers will pay the price along with anyone who votes in favor of it, making Maine's motto "The Way Life Shouldn't Be". Thank you.