

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LD 780

RESOLUTION: Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive Autonomy

Committee on Judiciary: January 22, 2024

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My name is Shannon Carr, I'm a board-certified obstetrician-gynecologist. I am an officer and speaking on behalf of the Maine Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG); National ACOG also supports these views. Perhaps more importantly I'm speaking on behalf of the interests of my patients and their families here in Maine.

My statement today is simple. The essential truth, and fact of the matter is: women cannot fully participate in our society and will suffer adverse health outcomes unless they have the agency to control their own reproductive destinies. Being able to do so is a fundamental human right, the most basic of human rights. The citizens of Maine need to be assured that they have the *constitutional rights* to: 1) have and/ or parent children, 2) to not have children, and 3) to have the resources to raise children in safe and healthy environments. These are the core tenets of reproductive justice.

These fundamental human rights cannot be at the discretion of politics which shape our legislature. Mainers deserve the opportunity to weigh in and affirm that Maine's constitution *explicitly* protects and codifies these basic human rights, rather than being subject to the ideology of our lawmakers.

Family planning care, contraception and abortion, is essential health care, and we cannot restrict or deny Mainers these basic services. A catastrophic public health crisis has emerged as many states have banned or severely restricted these essential services after the *Dobbs* ruling in 2022. I deeply appreciate that the abortion issue presents difficult challenges on many levels for folks both in support of and not in support of abortion. This is *not* a reason to deny Mainers this fundamental human right. The medical scientific community is continuing to collect data that shows how post-*Dobbs* state restrictions and bans have, in fact, escalated and intensified this public health crisis.

I urge you to protect Mainers' fundamental human rights and to support LD 780.