
Testimony in Support of LD 780, "Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive Autonomy."

James Myall

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Good morning, Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is James Myall, an Economic Policy Analyst at the Maine Center for Economic Policy, and I am here today to testify in support of LD 780, "Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive Autonomy." MECEP supports Mainers' rights to reproductive autonomy as essential components of economic security and well-being.

I want to recognize that reproductive autonomy is a fundamental human right, and one which has especially profound physical, mental, and emotional impacts on the lives of women. You will hear today from others about those personal impacts but I want to acknowledge the importance of those before focusing on the economic case.

Researchers who have studied the impact of access to contraceptive care and abortion have found that reproductive autonomy has a significant impact on the future labor force outcomes and overall income levels of women.¹ When women have the ability to control their own bodies, they are more likely to be able to go to college, to enter the workforce, and they have higher earnings when they are working.² This is particularly important because the people most likely to be impacted by unexpected pregnancies are those already living in or near poverty,³ as well as people experiencing some kind of crisis.⁴ Mainers who look for access to reproductive health services are already among the most vulnerable of our friends and neighbors, and when they can't get the care they need, their circumstances often worsen.

Access to contraceptive and abortion care also impacts the economic security of children, many of whom are born to women who previously had an abortion, or will do so in future. When women are able to choose the timing of when they have children, those children are better cared for, and less likely to live in poverty.⁵

These individual financial impacts also affect the wider economy. By reducing women's ability to work, abortion bans in states across the country have already cost \$172 billion annually in economic growth, according to one estimate, with almost 600,000 women prevented from entering the workforce in 2022.⁶

Mainers are fortunate to live in a state which currently protects reproductive freedom in its laws. MECEP believes that by passing LD 780, and consolidating that right in the state constitution, you have an opportunity to also consolidate the economic security of hundreds of thousands of Maine women and children, and to create a stronger economy for all of us.

I urge you to vote "ought to pass" and I'm happy to answer any questions.

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Notes

- ¹ Caitlin Knowles Meyers and Morgan Welch, "What can economic research tell us about the effect of abortion access on women's lives?" *Brookings*. Nov 30, 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/what-can-economic-research-tell-us-about-the-effect-of-abortion-access-on-womens-lives/>
- ² Kelly Jones, "At a Crossroads: The impact of abortion access on future economic outcomes." *American University*. Aug 9, 2021. https://aura.american.edu/articles/online_resource/At_a_Crossroads/23857644
- ³ Rachel K. Jones and Jenna Jerman, "Population Group Abortion Rates and Lifetime Incidence of Abortion: United States, 2008–2014." *American Journal of Public Health* 107(12), 1904-1909. Dec 2017. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5678377/>
- ⁴ Rachel K. Jones and Jenna Jerman, "Characteristics and Circumstances of U.S. Women Who Obtain Very Early and Second-Trimester Abortions." *PLOS ONE*, Jan 25, 2017. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0169969>
- ⁵ Diana Greene Foster, M. Antonia Biggs, Sarah Raifman, "Comparison of Health, Development, Maternal Bonding, and Poverty Among Children Born After Denial of Abortion vs After Pregnancies Subsequent to an Abortion." *JAMA Pediatrics* 172(11): 1053-1060. Nov 2018. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2698454> and Diana Greene Foster et al., "Effects of Carrying an Unwanted Pregnancy to Term on Women's Existing Children." *Journal of Pediatrics* 205: 183-189. Oct 30, 2017. [https://www.jpeds.com/article/S0022-3476\(18\)31297-6/fulltext](https://www.jpeds.com/article/S0022-3476(18)31297-6/fulltext)
- ⁶ "Updated Analysis Of The Cost Of Abortion Restrictions To States." *Institute for Women's Policy Research*. Jan 2024 <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Updated-Analysis-of-the-Cost-of-Abortion-Restrictions-to-States.pdf>