

IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 780, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive Autonomy

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
Room 438, State House, Augusta, Maine
Monday, January 22, 2024

Good morning Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Austin Vaughan and I am third year medical student at the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine currently doing my rotations at Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston. I'm also a leader of the student section of the Maine Medical Association and past leader of the UNECOM's Student Government Association. I am delivering this testimony in support of LD 780, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive Autonomy and in support of the Sponsor's Amendment on behalf of myself. The views I'm providing today are my own.

My wife and I have loved living in Maine the last three years. Both of us being born and raised in Tampa, Florida, we enjoy the bemused looks and questions we get asked from people back in Florida about why we love it here so much. My mother in particular would harp me for the first couple years of living here about moving back when I finished my schooling – eager to complete her dream of having all her kids live on the same street as her. The reason she finally stopped was in the wake of the Dobbs decision in 2022, as she knew not only would my wife and I never live in a state where her healthcare rights were in jeopardy, but that I would never practice in a state where there would be limits to the healthcare I could provide to my future patients.

And it's not just me who feels that way. According to a 2022 survey of around 500 students across 125 medical schools, 77% of medical students said changes in abortion access would likely or very likely influence their decision of residency programs as well as where they'd be willing to start a family¹. In the first and only residency application cycle to finish since that decision, a snapshot the Association of American Medical College's residency results shows that OB/GYN applications in states where complete bans had been enacted decreased twice as much as applications in states with the least abortion restrictions².

But truthfully, the argument shouldn't have to reach the point of debating whether we might be ostracizing future physicians by not passing this law. Our answer to the earlier question about why we love it here so much?

It's that Mainers look after their own.

The sense of community we have felt across this state since the moment we got here is truly unparalleled. The people I have met – from medical professionals to baristas – just naturally present an aura of welcoming and family. The only way for this committee to stay

true to that mantra that my wife and I have come to love so much is to ensure that every person in this state has unequivocal and unfettered access to reproductive healthcare. We don't all have the same views when it comes to abortion, but we can all respect the desire for autonomy: both for patients looking to make difficult healthcare decisions, and for the Maine people to have a voice on what they feel is best for this state I've come to call home.

Please vote ought to pass on LD 780. Thank you for your time.

Austin Vaughan

OMS-III

1. Mermin-Bunnell, K., Traub, A. M., Wang, K., Aaron, B., King, L. P., & Kawwass, J. (2023, November 16). *Abortion restrictions and medical residency applications*. *Journal of Medical Ethics*. <https://jme.bmj.com/content/early/2023/11/15/jme-2023-109190>
2. Orgera, K., By, Orgera, K., Analyst, S. R., Mahmood, H., Analyst, former S. E. D., Grover, A., Director, E., & 13, A. (2023, April 13). *Training location preferences of U.S. Medical School Graduates Post Dobbs V. Jackson women's health*. Research and Action Institute. <https://www.aamcresearchinstitute.org/our-work/data-snapshot/training-location-preferences-us-medical-school-graduates-post-dobbs-v-jackson-women-s-health>