



Maine Medical
Association



• **TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

AND

THE MAINE OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

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 afternoon Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is R. Scott Hanson, MD and I am President-Elect of the Maine Medical 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 the Maine Medical Association and the Maine Osteopathic Association.

The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing more than 4,000 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA's mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people. The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services in order to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State.

This year MMA and MOA's legislative committees have joined together to advocate with a unified voice. And our Committee has determined that it is important to testify in support of LD 780 because we are in full support of ensuring patient access to the complete spectrum of reproductive health care and believe that the people of Maine enshrine that access as a constitutional right. This is a top priority for both MMA and MOA.

We wanted to raise a couple of points for this Committee to consider.

First, patients deserve to know that their access to reproductive health care is not constantly in jeopardy. Full-service reproductive health care includes abortion and contraception but also includes routine preventive health care like screening for breast and cervical cancer, prenatal counseling and diagnosis, treatment and counseling for HIV, syphilis and the other sexually-transmitted diseases plus so much more. Accessing this healthcare is critical to our patients' health and should not be at risk by the changing views of state government.

Second, clinicians need to know that Maine is a state where they are WELCOME and empowered to practice their profession based on evidence-based medical science and guided only by patient autonomy and their clinical judgment, not politics. Optimal reproductive health occurs when patients and their licensed health professionals are able to choose the course of treatment through shared decision-making that is fully informed by up-to-date clinical standards. Physicians, especially our OB/Gyn colleagues, spend thousands of hours acquiring and maintaining the necessary skills to determine what is medically appropriate for each patient. The people of Maine deserve nothing less.

We know that our members may have differing personal views on this topic, but, as medical professionals, we also know that patients need to be able to make informed decisions about their own healthcare. The members of MMA and MOA promise to always provide medically accurate information to our patients so they can choose what course of action is best for them in that moment and in the future.

You can tell by the color of my beard that my wife and I are no longer "in the market" for reproductive healthcare services, but my daughters may be soon. So for professional and indeed *very* personal reasons, I urge you to make the State of Maine an even more welcoming place for clinicians to come to practice. By passing laws that protect the patient/clinician relationship, we are telling the medical community that we trust their training and clinical judgment.

Thank you for considering the support of Maine's physician community about L.D. 780. We will always stand by our patients to ensure that their access to healthcare, including reproductive health care, is not at risk. We urge an "ought to pass" vote on this bill. I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Thank you,

Scott Hanson, MD, MPH, FACP
President-Elect, Maine Medical Association