

January 22nd, 2024

Senator Anne Carney, Representative Matt Moonen, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Elayne Richard from Fairfield, Maine. I'm testifying in support of **LD 780, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Protect Personal Reproductive Autonomy.**

I have been voting since I was 18 years old. Fifty-two years and I have never missed an election no matter how big or small, they have all been important to me. The right to vote is an essential Constitutional right afforded by our state and federal government. It is the basis of our democracy. Generations of Americans and Mainers have fought and died for the right to vote and the right to speak up for our beliefs. Mainers are a tough and often stubborn lot who want to have a say in what is important to us and our personal beliefs and values. Voting is the way to do that.

Something as basic and intrinsic to our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness that reproductive autonomy encompasses, should not be left up to the whim of politicians. Every Mainer deserves a voice in shaping their own, their families and their community's future and voting for a constitutional amendment on something as personal as reproductive autonomy is how we do that.

For me, this resolution is not about whether or not you agree with me on the right to reproductive autonomy which I do believe in as an activist with Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights. This is about the democratic process that lets the people have their right to vote on such an all-encompassing issue to "determine one's own life course."

A constitutional amendment that will protect our rights to make our own personal private decisions about our reproductive healthcare including when to have a family, whether or not to use birth control or receive abortion care is imperative in light of the Dobbs decision and the constant attacks that reproductive rights are now under. Let Mainers decide whether or not Maine's Constitution should be amended to specifically protect our fundamental right to reproductive autonomy.

Thank you for voting ought to pass and giving all Mainers our democratic right to have a voice in determining our future.

Sincerely,

Elayne Richard  
Fairfield, Maine

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elayne Richard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.