

Testimony of Genevieve Whiting, MD, in **OPPOSITION** of
LD 975, "An Act to Repeal Laws Allowing Abortion and to
Criminalize Abortion"
*and the slate of
bills today*

Good day, honorable members of the Joint Standing committee on Judiciary. My name is Dr. Genevieve Whiting. I am a pediatrician in Westbrook, a resident of Cape Elizabeth and secretary of the Maine chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Most importantly, I am an advocate for the health and wellbeing of Maine's children and families. I OPPOSE LD975.

I am here today because every Mainer, child and adult, should have the right to receive high quality, evidence based, unbiased healthcare. Healthcare includes reproductive healthcare, which includes abortion.

As a practicing pediatrician, in every patient encounter, no matter the concern, I seek to provide information that allows patients and caregivers to make informed healthcare decisions weighing risks and benefits.

Each individual has a unique personal and medical history, priorities, goals and needs.

I have been asked many times, 'What would you do in my situation?' To which I always respond, 'this is not about me. I'm here to help you figure out what's right for you.'

Today, I'd like to share with you the evidence regarding health, abortion and abortion restrictions so that you, as lawmakers, can make an informed decision for the people of Maine whom you represent.

1. Unintended pregnancies happen and most often in communities with limited access to healthcare—rural areas, minoritized groups, those with lower incomes, and adolescents.
2. When someone is pregnant, they have options. They can continue the pregnancy and choose parenting, adoption, or foster care, or they can choose to have an abortion.
3. Every option carries risks and benefits.
4. Legal abortion in a medical settings is safe. In the US, risk of death is 14 times higher for pregnancy than abortion.
 - a. 50,000 Pregnant individuals in the US face severe pregnancy complications every year and 700 die from pregnancy or delivery complications. Risks are higher in those denied a wanted abortion.
5. Restricting abortion leads to harm. When people can't access the care they need safely:
 - a. More unsafe, non-medical, abortions happen-
Worldwide, 47,000 women per year die as a result.

- b. People denied a wanted abortion have higher rates of pregnancy complications including death and subsequent chronic health problems.
- c. Children born as the result of an abortion denial are more likely to live in poverty. They, and other children in the home, have poorer developmental outcomes.
- d. Pregnant individuals denied a wanted abortion are more likely to remain with a violent partner putting themselves and their children at risk.

6. State with abortion bans see worse health outcomes for women and children including increased infant mortality, pre-term and low birthweight births.

Knowing all of this, I ask this committee to consider the risks and benefits of restricting access to full reproductive healthcare including abortion.

I am not asking you to decide what a pregnant individual should do. I am asking that you ensure Mainers have the ability to make that decision for themselves.

I urge you to join me in opposing LD 975 and protect Mainers' right to make their own healthcare choices.

Thank you.