

Jessie Stewart

Hancock, ME

In Opposition of LD 975, LD 886, LD 253, LD 682, LD 887, LD 1007, LD 1154 of the 132nd session

Good morning Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn, Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Jessie Stewart. I am from Hancock, Maine. I am a UMaine Student in my 3rd year of my Master's of Social Work. I am here today to testify against this series of bills aimed to repress women's access to reproductive health care. I thank this committee for striking down the bills it already has today.

I never in my life imagined that I would be here with my 15-year-old daughter in 2025 fighting for her and my grandchildren's access to reproductive health care. She should not have to be missing school today, to be here fighting for her rights to reproductive healthcare when my grandmother already fought this fight.

These bills will take away and severely restrict Maine women and their doctors freedom to choose what is best for their bodies, fetus', and families, as well as increase the amount of child, abuse, neglect, and poverty in a State—where resources are already exhausted.

Removing access to reproductive health care by disallowing mainecare to cover these services will not only disproportionately affect our most marginalized and vulnerable families by causing undue financial burden, but could also cause limitations and restrict access to life saving procedures for women who cannot afford to pay out of pocket.

If you have a mother, sister, daughter, wife, aunt, niece, or have ever known and cared about a woman, I urge this committee to think about them when you consider the repercussions that we have seen happen to women in other states where similar laws have passed.

Imagine being married and already having children and finding out your antibiotic made your birth control ineffective but your health and finances won't allow you to have a healthy pregnancy or financially provide for another child, and you're left with an unthinkable choice.

Imagine having a miscarriage and needing a D&C to safely remove the remnants of the pregnancy from your womb, but being denied services because mainecare no longer covers the procedure that you need.

Imagine being 11 years old, being raped and impregnated, and being forced to carry a child in your underdeveloped body.

This is a bad deal for Maine or anywhere else where women are.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Jessie Stewart