

Good morning, esteemed members of the committee. My name is Stella Mills, I am a resident of freeport and a registered voter. I am here to discuss LD975's detrimental effects on the low-income communities in Maine.

The most significant reason for an abortion is a person's financial situation, which not only affects their ability to raise but also support the overall well-being of a child. People who are considered below the poverty line, earn \$15,650 or less annually and childcare on average costs \$12,980, which is 80% of their income. People in this situation often struggle to afford basic necessities for themselves, let alone provide adequately for a child. While poverty in Maine is only 10%, many families can not afford a house let alone children.

Additionally, it is crucial to understand the long-term effects of children being raised in households that cannot provide for their needs. When a family lacks sufficient income, children may suffer from hunger and lack of proper housing. This will have a devastating impact on their development, both physically and emotionally. These children often struggle in school, leading to lower academic achievement and fewer opportunities for a better future.

Furthermore low-income areas often lack sufficient sexual health education, which can lead to unsafe sexual practices and, consequently, unplanned pregnancies, further perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Birth control, for example, is an important prevention method, but it can be expensive if people aren't informed about their options. Without the proper education and access to birth control it will lead to more abortions, but as outlined in this bill, if passed both birth control and abortions will be banned.

By making abortion illegal and treating a fertilized egg as a person, LD975 forces people to carry pregnancies to term, regardless of their financial situation.

A common argument made for supporting restrictive abortion laws is that it could prevent the death of someone who will make the world better. What about the women who give up their careers for childcare and pregnancies? What about all of the children who are in poverty and can't get into a better situation? What about the thousands of children who are in foster care and orphanages who aren't properly cared for? What about the people who are alive but not living? We often focus so much on the potential of a fetus but fail to consider the potential of those who are already alive.

Thank you for your time and service.