

Testimony 3/28/25 on LD975

Wendy Ward, Portland, ME

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary, my name is Wendy Ward, I live in Portland, am a lifelong Mainer, and a mother and grandmother who cares about women's health and rights.

I am testifying against L.D. ~~975~~. 253,682,856,887,1007,1154

This bill is dangerous, archaic, misogynistic, repressive, regressive, and not in the interests of creating a greater society where all people thrive.

Women and girls should have autonomy over their bodies and their healthcare decisions, including how, when, and if they have or expand a family. Taking away a woman's right to control her own reproductive processes is barbaric. It is her body. And criminalizing healthcare providers who care for women and girls is asinine.

If you think abortion is just a backup plan for reckless one-night stands, think again.

I grew up next door to a pedophile. Knowing abortion was available was the only thing that saved my sanity as a teenager.

At 17, a self-motivated, high honors student and star athlete applying early decision to Colby with dreams of continuing to veterinary school, I found myself pregnant after failed birth control. After considering all options, including abortion, I chose to have my baby because I was lucky enough to have tremendous family support. Without that, I couldn't imagine bringing a child into the world not knowing how I would support us. But I was glad the option for abortion was available to me.

Or consider the abusive partner who forced himself on me and tried to impregnate me without my consent time and time again. I needed Plan B on multiple occasions. No way was I going to bring children into the world and an abusive relationship, where they would grow up thinking his behavior was a model of a healthy partnership.

Someone close to me accidentally got pregnant 3 times because antibiotics caused her birth control to fail. Three of their 4 kids have significant health issues and one needs 24-hour care. Stop and think how crippling that is to a family. They physically, mentally, and financially do not have the capacity for another child.

But this clearly isn't about caring for human life or children. If that were the case, these bills would instead be focused on helping existing children thrive and promoting affordable childcare, affordable healthcare, ensuring no child goes hungry nor is raised in a home with domestic violence or addiction or gunned down at school. These are critical factors that

promote optimal conditions for learning at school, nurturing a healthy self-esteem, and confidence to make good choices as they grow. And it's either a supportive ripple effect or a tragic downward spiral depending on the child's environment.

Women's bodies should be sovereign. Period.

My 10-year-old granddaughter will be either thanking you or cursing you in 8-10 years, depending on whether you decide her body is her own or that decisions others make about her body are more important than her own wishes.

Thank you for your deep consideration on this matter.

If you have a problem with abortion, consider that 100% of pregnancies and abortions are caused by men. Women don't get pregnant without them. A single man can impregnate hundreds of women a year. A woman has one pregnancy a year. Why are we wasting time controlling women when men are a much larger problem??

---

Additional thoughts:

Imagine telling men that every newborn boy would be vasectomized at birth until he could prove he was ready to be a quality parent? Then he would simply get his vasectomy reversed. If you're feeling a little uproar and indignation and thinking, "Who do you think you are to control men's bodies?", welcome to being a woman where everyone thinks they have a say over our flesh suits and functionalities.

Stop and think if the tables were turned and men were carrying the pregnancy. Do you think for one minute they would tolerate someone telling them they need to keep a fetus that they didn't want, weren't capable of caring for, couldn't afford, was severely and improperly developed and incapable of sustaining life, etc?

Unwanted children go through irreparable harm, have a much harder time learning in school; have lower self esteem and greater anger issues; are more likely to struggle in school and in relationships; and be involved in crime, abuse substances, and have addictions. Parents of unwanted children spend less effort choosing quality child care, helping with homework, or ensuring their kids are exposed to positive experiences and a conducive learning environment.

If a fetus is a full human with rights, why aren't missing fathers slapped with child support while a woman is pregnant?