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February 25, 2026

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

I am Amy Partridge-Barber, a resident of Carrabassett Valley. I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD335.

You will hear many stories today about the difference Planned Parenthood has made in peoples lives. I am here to remind you about what life looks like without Planned Parenthood. When I was a teenager, abortion was legal and Planned Parenthood was easily accessible to me for birth control and questions about STD's. For most of my life I took access to reproductive health care for granted. Then while in Chicago I saw an art exhibit I will never forget. Gallery walls were covered floor to ceiling with letters written to the Army of Three in California in the 1960's by women and men seeking help to access safe abortions. These were good people in hard situations. They turned to a small group of women whose goal was to save lives before 1973 when Roe V. Wade made abortion legal. I was frozen in place reading these letters because this was when it hit me; my mother could have easily been up there on that wall.

In 1967 my unmarried mother became pregnant with my sister. In 1968 there was a fast wedding and an unexpected baby, who ended up having a chromosomal disorder and would spend the rest of her life needing 24/7 care. Three years later my mom became pregnant with me. Before your mind slips into judgment, my mom was not promiscuous or irresponsible. Both pregnancies were the result of an IUD which failed to prevent pregnancy. My mom was

not ready to be a mom. She certainly was not ready to be a mom to a disabled child. And when I came along she had little to give a second child.

My sister has spent most of her life being cared for by women who are a part of the Roman Catholic Church. For the past 25 years she has been mothered by a woman who gets paid \$20 per hour to care for her. I am grateful beyond words for all the people who have come together to give my sister a good life. And, it has not been easy, for any of them, including my sister.

If abortion had been legal in 1967 and Planned Parenthood had been accessible I assure you my mom would have terminated her first pregnancy. And, odds are this would have allowed her to finish college, marry someone she loved, have a child when she was ready to mother. I told my mom once that she did the best she could with what she had. Her response was; "I don't remember any of it. It was just too hard."

To this day my mom can barely speak about any of this with words, but her body tells the tale. She has auto-immune disease, heart disease, and she is filled with rage and shame.

Do I wish my sister had never been born? No. I love her and she loves me. She is my family.

Do I wish I had never been born? No. At 17 I got myself out of a neglectful and abusive home. I have created a safe and happy life. I have spent my entire adult life devoted to preventing child abuse and helping people recover from child abuse.

I am a living breathing example of what the world looks like without Planned Parenthood.

I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD335.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Partridge-Barber

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