

March 29, 2021

**RE: LD 618 –An Act Regarding the Outdoor Release of Balloons and
LD 1023 -An Act to Define Intentional Balloon Releases as Litter**

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Stacey Keefer. I am a resident of Union.

I submitted testimony on the last balloon bill in Maine and urge you to support either or both bills. I would prefer to ban the use of balloons completely, but this is a step in the right direction. Balloons no longer represent joy when they are such a threat to wildlife and so easily become litter when released intentionally or unintentionally.

A few years ago, I found a pair of mylar, heart-shaped balloons with their ribbons snagged in a blueberry field near my home. The balloons were clearly a memorial for a woman who died from a brutal murder in New York City. Messages of peace and condolences with her full name were written all over the balloons and it was easy to find the story in major New York news sources. It is likely that these balloons were released in New York and had travelled all the way to Union, Maine where I was fortunately able to clean up the litter. There is no need to celebrate happy or sad human moments by littering and unintentionally threatening health and safety of wildlife, some of which may already be endangered species.

Children learn from adults. They are adaptable and can be taught by adults that balloons releases are littering.

Sea creatures and birds cannot submit testimony to this committee. I believe that if they could, they would also ask you to support legislation to include released balloons as litter. Thank you.

Stacey Keefer