

Lauren Perreault
Cape Elizabeth
LD 227

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee, I'm Lauren Perreault, I live in Cape Elizabeth, and I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 227.

One of the most powerful memories of my childhood was traveling with my parents from Connecticut to a march on Washington DC in support of a woman's right to chose. It was 1989, I was 8 years old. I didn't really understand why we were there, but I knew it was important. I remember being surrounded by a sea of powerful, strong, vocal women and a lot of men, and feeling the strength of a community of people chanting for their rights. Eleven years later, at the age of 19, I needed to rely on work of these powerful women, women like my mother, who stood up for their rights, but many for the rights of all the girls and women to come. At 19, I had an abortion. I was lucky because I lived in a liberal town in a liberal state, and my OBGYN's office could perform the procedure quietly in the office. I didn't have to walk through the doors of a clinic or Planned Parenthood and steel myself against the hatred and ignorance of people who could never understand the pain I was going through. I say I was lucky, but it shouldn't be that way. People deserve to make their own medical decisions about their bodies, away from any religious doctrine or ideology. All people deserve dignity in even the most harrowing circumstances.

In order to protect reproductive rights in Maine, we must advance legislature that protects not just the patients but also the providers, staff, and personnel who do this important and difficult work. As we are seeing, there is a terrifying trend among state governments to tear away reproductive rights that are INNATE, which have been hard won by our mothers and grandmothers before us. These protections affect ALL Mainers, not just women of childbearing age, but all women, all men, all people. We must, in our state, be a beacon of freedom. You all have the opportunity to pass legislation at a treacherously pivotal time in our nation's history. The actions you take today will have ramifications for years, decades, maybe centuries to come.

I ask you to do everything you can to protect reproductive health care and gender-affirming care in our state. This care is life-saving medical care. Please use your position of power to protect our rights.

I urge to to vote Ought to Pass on LD 227.

Thank you,
Lauren Perreault
Cape Elizabeth