

Comments for Testimony

On HP 635, LD 975 as sponsored by Reps. Griffin & Lemelin.

Do the people of Levant and Chelsea not have real problems that they want their representatives to address with their elected positions? If not, I envy them and will endeavor to visit and see if perhaps I wouldn't want to live in such a utopia. I have a hard time imagining that abortion is a rampant plague on those communities, as neither is it a rampant plague in mine nor anywhere else in the state: Maine has one of the lowest rates of abortion among women of child-bearing age in the northeast. Should we not focus on real problems, like access to healthcare for our rural seniors? The labor market? Opiates? Potholes? Property taxes? School funding? No, it seems not.

This is a stupid and abhorrent bill, and the sponsors are wasting everyone's time, especially the 64+% of Mainers who don't want this. (<https://www.mainepublic.org/health/2022-06-24/the-state-of-abortion-in-maine-in-6-charts>)

On reviewing Maine DHHS's existing abortion data (the most recent 2023 data set: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/public-health-systems/data-research/data/index.html>), I am personally horrified to see that a non-zero number of girls ages 10-14, and many more above 14 but below the ages of consent and adulthood, are even *becoming* pregnant. This is revolting, and makes me nauseous. How do we solve THIS problem? How might we focus on preventing childhood pregnancy *at all*, instead of forcing young girls — children — to keep and carry pregnancies, and instead of protecting the despicable men who cruelly impregnate them? It seems some would rather crusade against the physical, economic, psychological, and spiritual health of Maine's women and girls, rather than protecting us.

They'd rather choose to focus on harming women across the state, by facilitating, enabling, and sanctioning violence against us. To what end, I'm sure I have no idea.

Let's assume we all — me, this committee, perhaps even the bill's sponsors — want what's best for Maine. Maine has real problems, of which abortion is clearly not one. Maine is an aging state, in desperate need of a young and entrepreneurial labor force, particularly in healthcare. As a relatively young person, for whom autonomy over my own body is quite important (as is true for many, many others, both men and women, who might constructively contribute to Maine's economy), the prospect of Maine passing bills like this disincentivizes me from wanting to live here.

My generation and the one behind me are highly mobile; we can often work remotely or have transferable skills (like healthcare) that we can take elsewhere, to states whose priorities more closely match our own. If you want to reverse Maine's progress on recovering from "the brain drain" (and if you want to start working towards a Taliban-esque regime in the state, as the bill's sponsors so evidently do), by all means, pass this law. But I have a hard time believing that *this* — creating a hostile environment for exactly the young men and women we want and need to be moving, and moving back, to our state to ensure a long term, strong economy — is what is best for Maine.

Maine needs more young people. Maine needs a strong economy. This bill and bills like it, if passed, will directly contribute to a rapid deceleration of progress on both those fronts, and is anathema to Maine's ethos and values. So, Reps. Griffin & Lemelin, enjoy your shuttered businesses and your beautiful old homes falling increasingly into irrevocable disrepair, your

lack of in-home healthcare and your under-staffed nursing homes, your overburdened and under-resourced healthcare system, because we, your labor force and tax base, won't be here to fix them.

Keep abortion safe and legal in Maine, and keep Maine a place that young people choose to live.