

Livka Farrell
Rockland
LD 975

I'm very concerned about the Legislature passing laws like LD975, which limit the rights of pregnant people. Pregnant people include women, trans adults, and children — in other words, humans under the age of 18.

We must respect the agency of Maine's pregnant citizens because they are human beings. It is my understanding that a fetus only becomes a legal person when they are born. The theoretical "rights" of fetuses, zygotes, and even fertilized eggs pre-birth cannot supersede the existing rights of a Maine citizen.

The authors of this bill have not considered the implications of changing the legal definition of "personhood" to include "the unborn" in Maine. If a fetus is a person, it can assert its legal rights to due process, citizenship, and other protections. The logic of this proposed law would permit individuals to claim a fetus on their taxes, sue for child support for a fetus, and collect insurance if they miscarry.

The dangers are serious: if a legal person exists from the moment of conception — every time a sperm and an egg meet — that means there is no end to what the State of Maine can mandate a pregnant person can and cannot do. Is it wise for the State to have so much influence over a particular class of people?

Conferring legal personhood on a fetus will create confusion, disrupt assisted reproduction techniques like IVF, threaten medical privacy, and upend the rules and regulations of life in Maine. The effects are likely to be devastating, particularly for the most vulnerable among us: people of color, immigrants, disabled people, and low-income people.

Does the Legislature have the will to upend decades of existing State and Federal law to elevate a hotly contested political position? In *Roe v. Wade*, the U.S. Supreme Court stated that the word "person" as used in the Fourteenth Amendment "does not include the unborn." Even in 2022, when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the Court declined to definitively weigh in on "fetal personhood" in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. Maine should not pass laws that are far out in front of U.S. Supreme Court decisions.

I was born in 1980, and I grew up in a time when *Roe v. Wade* was settled law. We had the luxury of discounting extremist efforts to disempower the rights of pregnant people — under the guise of legal fetal personhood — in the past. I implore the Legislature to stand firmly against any curtailment of equal rights and protections under the law!

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue.