



Maine Equal Justice
People Policy Solutions

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MEJ Testimony *in opposition to* LD 253, An Act to Prevent the MaineCare Program from Covering Abortion Services; LD 682, An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Abortions; LD 886, An Act to Regulate Medication Abortions; LD 887, An Act to Make Manufacturers Responsible for Proper Disposal of Abortion Drugs and Require a Health Care Provider to Be Physically Present During a Chemical Abortion; LD 975, An Act to Repeal Laws Allowing Abortion and to Criminalize Abortion; LD 1007, An Act to Update the State's Informed Consent Laws Regarding Drug-induced Abortion; LD 1154, An Act to Require That Informed Consent for Abortion Include Information on Perinatal Hospice

March 28, 2025

Good morning, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Kathy Kilrain del Rio, I use she/her pronouns, and I'm the Advocacy and Programs Director for Maine Equal Justice, a nonprofit legal aid provider working to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity for people in Maine.

Access to abortion is essential for Mainers to be able to make the right decision for themselves and their families about whether to carry a pregnancy to term and when and how to become a parent. This is a basic human right. It is also critical for the economic wellbeing of many low- and even middle-income people in our state. While financial concerns are not the only factor that people weigh when deciding if they need an abortion, it is often an important factor, especially for people who are already parents.¹ Once someone determines that an abortion is the right decision for them, cost can then be a significant barrier to getting timely care or to meeting their other basic needs. Maine's commitment to ensuring MaineCare coverage for abortion has been a significant support for pregnant people with low incomes in accessing this essential health care. We strongly oppose any legislation, including LD 253, that would undermine that access by eliminating coverage through MaineCare or other insurance.

Pregnant people in consultation with their medical providers are the only people qualified to determine when and if an abortion is needed. Politicians are not qualified to make those determinations – especially because every pregnancy is unique. The autonomy of pregnant people was infringed upon prior to the removal of the viability ban in Maine. This was especially true for pregnant people with lower incomes. Those with higher economic means were more able to seek out abortion care later in pregnancy even if that meant traveling out of state with all the associated costs. It was inequitable and undermined the freedom and dignity of lower income people. Maine voters have also made clear their support for policymakers who

¹ <https://www.guttmacher.org/journals/psrh/2005/reasons-us-women-have-abortions-quantitative-and-qualitative-perspectives>

supported the removal of the ban. We should not go backwards, which would happen with the passage of LD 682.

Even more harm would come from LD 975, which would remove all access to abortion. As we said earlier, abortion is essential health care. The decision about whether to continue a pregnancy should lie with the person who is pregnant and their medical providers – not with politicians. Denying people the autonomy to make that personal decision for themselves and their families undermines the freedom, wellbeing, and economic security for those who do not want to continue a pregnancy based on their personal circumstances. Maine voters have made clear again and again that they support access to abortion based on their support for elected leaders who vote for bills that improve access to abortion. Mainers recognize that abortion care is health care.

LD 886, LD 887, LD 1007, and LD 1154 all seek to create unnecessary barriers to abortions and in some cases would provide information that is not grounded in scientific evidence or medical best practices. Any effort to make it more difficult to access abortion care has a disproportionate impact on people with low incomes.² When low-income people are unable to access abortion care, it has significant impacts on their economic security. Forcing someone to continue a pregnancy against their will undermines their physical and mental health. Most of all, every Mainer has a fundamental right to control their body and their life.

As you have heard many times today, abortion is health care. It is a safe, routine medical procedure and an essential part of reproductive health care throughout a pregnancy. Just as every person is unique, so too are their pregnancies and the circumstances that may necessitate an abortion. It is impossible to anticipate and legislate every outcome of a pregnancy or the contexts and constraints within which reproductive decisions are made. This is why personal medical decisions must be made by the pregnant individual and their medical providers. For these reasons, **we urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass of all the bills before you today**. Thank you.

² <https://www.npr.org/2024/08/27/nx-s1-4998884/the-financial-side-of-abortion-access>