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LD 975

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen of the Judiciary Committee.

As a young woman, born and raised in the great state of Maine, I am writing to you to wholeheartedly oppose Bill LD975 and all others related to it. I have many reasons for this, but I would like to make it known to all of the committee, whether Democrat or Republican, that I am no baby killing witch. I would not choose abortion for myself unless in a medical emergency where my child's potential quality of life would be impacted. However, I recognize that not everyone shares my stance, and I recognize that people besides myself should have the freedom to make a choice about their pregnancy. Here is a list of my reasonings why this bill should be shut down here and now, though you will probably hear many of these reasons from other speakers, none of whom I have corroborated with for this testimony.

To start us off, Statistics show that in states with abortion bans, the maternal and infant mortality rate is higher than states without abortion bans. The simple reason for this being that under laws that restrict abortion, there is many medical situations that inhabit a legal grey area, and doctors are less willing to treat patients when they have the threat of arrest hanging over their heads. In many cases, where a patient has had an incomplete miscarriage—where the fetus is dead but fetal tissue still remains in the uterus—doctors have to remove the dead tissue from the uterus in order to prevent sepsis. Under abortion laws, these procedures are prohibited or often delayed, and there is many cases of patients either losing reproductive function due to this, or even dying.

I understand that those who support this bill often care about the sanctity of life, as do I. I believe all life is sacred from the smallest ant to the largest whale. It is a blessing that in a chaotic universe of constant destruction and evolution, life formed and is permitted to continue existence even with every odd stacked against us. But prohibiting abortion and abortion related procedures is not protecting life. In the cases above, it is destroying it.

I understand that many of us are worried about the birth rate dropping in Maine, as it is a reasonable fear. The elderly die, and the young folks either leave the state entirely or do not work to repopulate it. Many hospitals such as the Blue Hill Hospital and York Hospital have shut down their L&D wards entirely due to the plummeting birth rate. But this does not encourage people to have children. If anything, it only discourages it more, especially for the large percentage of our population that live in rural areas where a hospital can often be more than an hour's drive away. The combination of an abortion ban with the slow dismantling of hospitals and L&D wards will have horrific consequences on the people in our state who are either pregnant or planning to become pregnant, and will cause more unnecessary deaths in the long run, and if you are truly concerned with preserving life, you will recognize that this is a very, very bad thing.

If we want to encourage a rise in population, I believe it prudent that we address the underlying issues that contribute to these factors first. The rising cost of living and limited opportunities in the state are most likely among the highest factors that contribute to the declining birth rate not just here, but all over the country and the western world itself. Minimum wage here is less than \$15 an hour, and even in a household with two working adults, this is not enough to sustain a family. We often focus on minimum wage, but we should be focusing on a LIVING wage instead of a surviving wage. The people of our state deserve better than to live from paycheck to paycheck, only spending money on food and gas and bills without any to enjoy ourselves. If we had a higher minimum wage, a living wage instead of a surviving wage, people would find themselves more financially comfortable and more inclined to have children. A normal, complication free hospital birth in and of itself can cost tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical bills even with insurance. If you are living on \$14.65 an hour and working a full time job, even with saving that is still not enough to pay solely for the birth of a child, not even including the prenatal

appointments and providing for the child for its whole life. If you truly care about life, if you truly care about keeping our state populated and you truly care about babies, then please look around to figure out the real issues preventing our population from increasing. Because I can guarantee that it is not simply because of people having abortions.

To provide you with an example, let me spin you a metaphor. Envision a lobster if you will. The lobster lives its best life and survives the best in the deep, cold waters of the ocean, feeding off carrion and whatever else it finds edible. If you take a lobster out of that environment, it may survive for a little while but will not thrive. It will not be inclined to reproduce. If you put it in a boiling pot of water, it dies. If you put it in the middle of the woods, it dies. If you put it in the desert or the rainforest, it dies. If you put it in a pond, it dies. In order to keep the lobster and its potential descendants happy and healthy, you must keep them in an environment that encourages them to not just survive but to thrive.

If you care about life, if you care about preserving our heritage and population, then you must make our home a place not where we may just survive, but also thrive. An Abortion Ban, ultimately, is a simplistic bandaid solution for a very real and very big problem, a problem like a festering, necrotic wound that destroys all life around it, and will ultimately cause more harm than good in the long run. In order to save the lives you care about, you must be willing to take action to ensure that not only are people encouraged to give birth here, but to settle here and make our state their home as well.

Thank you for your time.