

Dana Peirce
Yarmouth, ME
LD 975

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Dana Peirce. I live in Yarmouth, Maine, and I urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on all the bills being discussed today: LD 253, LD 682, LD 886, LD 975, LD 1007, and LD 1154.

I have testified before the legislature before, and I will continue to. If you haven't heard my story, it begins when I was 32 weeks pregnant with my second child, who we had named Cameron. My pregnancy had been uneventful, and I was scheduled for a routine growth scan at 32 weeks gestation because of my age, which was 39 at the time. It was January 25th, 2019, when that scan showed that Cameron was suffering from a broken femur, had numerous other healed fractures throughout his body, and, because of other abnormalities, would not be able to survive outside of my body. These anomalies were the result of a random genetic mutation—essentially just really bad luck. As I have before, I will tell you again that I cannot adequately express the anguish that my husband and I felt in those moments. We, and others like us, that have desperately needed an abortion, for whatever reason, have suffered enough.

The most loving decision we could make was for me to have an abortion, to end Cameron's suffering. Unfortunately, that decision, because of our laws at the time, meant that we had to travel to a Colorado abortion clinic, one of only 3 providers in the country that would take me as a patient. The expense alone would have prevented a majority of Mainers from accessing this essential healthcare. The abortion alone cost \$25,000 out of pocket, not to mention flights, a weeklong hotel stay, childcare, and time away from work. We have immense privilege and could access this care without a second thought, but there are not many who can.

Please know that anyone needing an abortion in the third trimester is in profound distress. I suffered enough. The relief I felt when I knew that Cameron's suffering was over was also profound. I know that others that have received abortion care, at any point during pregnancy, have felt a similar relief, for a variety of reasons.

I didn't need to be judged any more, to sign another piece of paperwork to know that another person thought I should have made another choice. I get it. I know that another might have chosen to carry Cameron to delivery, and watch him die of suffocation and in agony—"naturally." I could not have done that to myself or to Cameron, but I would never legislate against someone who needed to make that decision, for whatever reason. Please don't legislate against mine.

I dealt with a really hard thing. I tell my kids, one born before Cameron, one after, that they can deal with hard things. As a culture, with the laws we enact, we should demonstrate that we know that hard things happen in real life, to people just like us. We can trust ourselves and each other to deal with these difficult situations. We can trust women to make responsible and compassionate decisions with their doctors. We do not need lawmakers to be involved in decisions women must make about their own bodies and lives. Politicians are unqualified to make personal, private, deeply complex medical decisions about pregnancy and reproductive health care. Patients and their trusted medical providers should be able to make these decisions without political interference.

Please join me in continuing to allow women to make responsible, ethical, loving decisions, with the guidance of their medical providers, about their own bodies and lives. Please vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 253, LD 682, LD 886, LD 975, LD 1007, and LD 1154.