

To: Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable members of the committee

From: Audrey Piltch

Re: Testimony in Opposition to LD 253, An Act to Prevent the MaineCare Program from Covering Abortion Services

I am writing to you as a young woman, Mainer, and student. I urge you to deeply reflect on and commit to opposing LD 253. I ask you to show our nation, suffering in a time of repealed rights and endangered freedoms, that Maine stands firm and steady on equality.

The MaineCare program already recognizes that pregnant individuals are among those who are likely to fall through the gaps of healthcare coverage. This needed and notable program shows immense support for Maine citizens where they need it most. Pregnancies carry enormous risks, including increased risk of death or injury, and there is no reason Maine citizens should not have access to abortion services if and when they are needed.

Though the issue is intensely debated in many spaces, the final choice always comes down to the individual. If this safe, professional, and accessible option is removed, people will be forced to resort to much more uncertain and hazardous methods.

For my friends and I, coming home to Maine is a time to reconnect, spend time together, and feel the comfort of our own state. I never think of it as a place of danger. The proposal of this bill is a painful one to see, knowing some of the people closest to me will lose basic safety and health coverage. Risk of unwanted pregnancy is already a stressor in many of my peers' lives, but now they will no longer have the option to receive care from trained, local, and experienced professionals.

I ask you to protect our rights and keep myself and other students safe and cared for in our home state.

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey Piltch

Freeport