

3/26/25

Dear members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am Magili Chapman Quinn, DO of Scarborough, ME. I am writing to oppose any efforts to criminalize abortion. This bill was brought to my attention last week by my 15 yo daughter, who texted me, "I don't want this to happen". In 2025, after hundreds of years of work on the part of women to gain decision making power and sovereignty over our own bodies, that this is even a possibility, is unfathomable to me.

The decision to terminate a pregnancy is deeply personal and complex. It is influenced by factors such as health risks, socio-economic status, and circumstances surrounding the pregnancy. Criminalizing abortion does not eliminate the need for it but instead creates an unsafe environment where women's health and rights are severely compromised.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, approximately 73 million induced abortions occur worldwide each year. In the United States alone, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that in 2019, nearly 630,000 abortions were performed. These numbers reflect the reality that many women will, at some point, seek an abortion for reasons ranging from medical necessity to personal circumstances. The criminalization of abortion does not reduce these numbers; instead, it forces women into unsafe and potentially life-threatening situations, often resorting to illegal or unregulated procedures.

I have known many women both personally and during my medical career who have made the choice to end a pregnancy for countless reasons. Never once has this decision been without considerable emotional consequence to the mother or parents involved. Humans are wired to procreate and the choice to end a pregnancy is difficult and painful in most cases, even if the circumstances that led to the pregnancy were traumatic or unwanted.

Criminalizing abortion disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, particularly those who are already marginalized. One such group is women who become pregnant as a result of rape. According to the National Crime Victimization Survey, an estimated 1 in 6 women in the U.S. have been the victim of an attempted or completed rape. 1 in 20 of these women will find themselves pregnant as a result. This is 5% of women who are raped become pregnant as a result of unwanted and violent sexual assault.

Data from Guttmacher and the American Journal of Public Health indicate that many of these pregnancies are terminated. In fact, about 32% of women who become pregnant as a result of rape report having an abortion (that leaves 68% of rape induced pregnancies carried to term...honestly this is the more staggering number to me and speaks to the willingness of women to be carriers of life under even the worst circumstances, nonetheless they should have the choice). These statistics emphasize the importance of maintaining access to safe, legal abortion care for women facing trauma and hardship beyond their control.

Historically, women have fought for control over their reproductive rights, as it is central to their freedom, health, and equality in society. The fight for legal abortion can be traced back to the

early 20th century when women like Margaret Sanger advocated for birth control access and safe reproductive care. In 1973, the landmark Roe v. Wade decision legalized abortion in the U.S., affirming that women have the constitutional right to make decisions about their bodies. This decision was a monumental victory in the fight for women's rights and autonomy.

Criminalizing abortion today would be a severe setback, reversing decades of progress toward gender equality and bodily autonomy and frankly is only about the patriarchy's need to maintain control and the "status quo". Why do we not see a bill to mandate vasectomies to all men who are not married and in relationships where pregnancy is desired? Vasectomy is a safe and reversible procedure and would eradicate unwanted pregnancy almost immediately.

Abortion restrictions do not lead to fewer abortions. Instead, they lead to more unsafe abortions and greater health risks for women. In countries with strict abortion laws, women often resort to dangerous procedures that jeopardize their lives. The World Health Organization estimates that 25 million unsafe abortions occur each year, many of which are in countries where abortion is heavily restricted. These women's lives and well-being are endangered, all because their basic right to make choices about their own bodies was denied.

The criminalization of abortion is not only an infringement on women's rights but makes the providing of life-saving health interventions in many cases, on the part of doctors who provide them, a crime. In this modern era where these interventions are well established, being unable as a physician to provide them, is grounds for malpractice and a direct violation of the oath we all take to "first, do no harm".

We cannot ignore the long-standing struggles women have faced in securing the autonomy and care they deserve. As we reflect on the rights women have fought for over generations, it is crucial that we protect access to safe and legal abortion for the well-being and dignity of all women. I need to be able to tell my daughters they will receive the reproductive care they need, full stop.

Thank you for considering this perspective in your decision-making process.