

Jason Raper
Auburn
LD 682

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Testimony of Jason Raper in Opposition of LD 682: An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Abortion

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Jason Raper, resident of Auburn, Androscoggin County. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to voice my opposition for LD 682: An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Abortion.

The central purpose of this bill is to specify the conditions under which abortions be provided legally in Maine. To briefly simplify those conditions: rape, incest, life or health of the mother, and lethal fetal abnormalities. This includes no timeframe before which an abortion may be legally performed otherwise.

I'm certain in examining this topic, the committee will review abortion statistics, identify the case of need, seek out personal stories, and hear especially from women. I expect many of those arguments this committee and the public has heard before, and would likely be further conveyed more articulately than I can offer. Because of that, I'd like to go in a different direction.

In Florida and South Carolina, abortion is legal up to 6 weeks. In states like Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama, abortion is banned at any stage with varying exceptions similar to this legislative proposal. Meanwhile, Montana, Wyoming, and Kansas ban abortion after 22 weeks or later.

Are we really seeking our peer states to be Texas or Alabama? Are we really saying that states like Florida and Montana are less draconian than our own?

I always thought that what was synonymous with the Maine identity was Yankee ingenuity. An identity that wasn't just some sort of quirky MacGyvering, but the sort of practical perseverance modeled by independent and principled women like Olympia Snowe and Margaret Chase Smith. This legislation isn't in their tradition, but in someone else's, and we need to each take some time to consider what we're being asked to turn away from and what new identity we're being asked to embrace.

Maine has always trusted women to make these decisions. Why should we turn away from that now?

I urge you to vote "Ought not to pass."