

March 27, 2025

Re: LD 682, An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Abortions

To: Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Judiciary Committee

The Maine Chapter of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (MC-FFRF) writes in opposition to LD 682, An Act to Amend Certain Laws Regarding Abortions. In recent years, there have been calls for greater tracking and reporting of abortion data through processes like the NAPHSIS data requirements. These proposed regulations impose stringent documentation and reporting obligations on healthcare providers and patients seeking abortion services. The reality is that these requirements could undermine personal privacy, reduce access to care, and place unnecessary burdens on both providers and individuals seeking abortion services.

At the core of any healthcare system is the protection of patient privacy. Individuals should be able to trust that their personal health decisions are not subjected to unnecessary scrutiny. The NAPHSIS data requirements create significant concerns regarding privacy, as it mandates the collection of information such as demographic details, reasons for seeking an abortion, and medical histories. This data, if mishandled or exposed, could lead to serious breaches of privacy.

Such detailed reporting could cause individuals to feel more vulnerable, potentially deterring them from seeking care at all. Furthermore, such data could be misused by anti-abortion activists or organizations seeking to target those who access abortion services. In a climate of heightened surveillance, individuals may become fearful of being tracked or exposed to public judgment.

Providers may be concerned about the administrative burden of complying with stringent data reporting requirements. Small clinics or independent practitioners may decide that the cost of compliance is too high or that they cannot afford to face potential legal scrutiny based on the information they are required to report. This could lead to fewer abortion providers and make it harder for individuals to access care, particularly in rural or underserved areas.

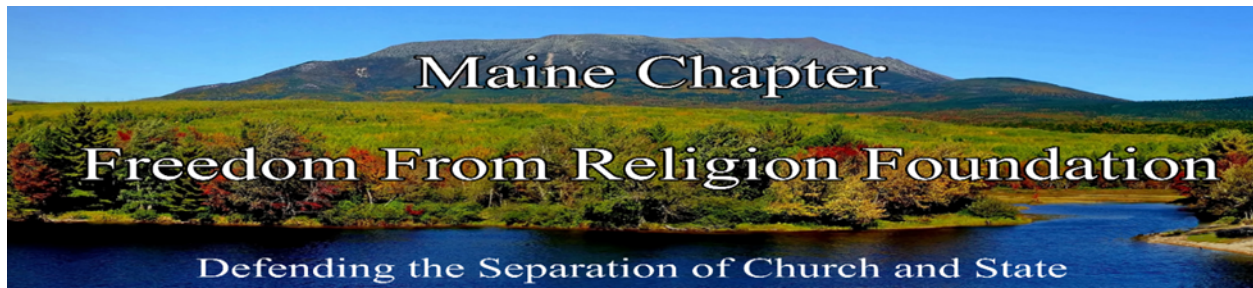
The collection of sensitive abortion data could also lead to serious risks of data misuse. Anti-abortion groups and organizations could potentially gain access to these databases or request that information be made public. This could result in harassment or even violence against patients and providers. There is a real concern that the data could be used to target abortion providers or patients for political or religious reasons, further criminalizing or demonizing reproductive healthcare.

These regulations would require clinics and healthcare providers to allocate significant resources toward data collection and reporting, diverting time and attention away from patient care. For

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smaller clinics, the financial and logistical challenges of complying with these requirements could be overwhelming. These regulations could lead to delays in care, longer wait times, or, in some cases, force providers to discontinue offering abortion services altogether.

Every individual should have the right to make personal decisions about their reproductive health without fear of government overreach or societal judgment. By mandating the collection of detailed information, we shift the focus away from the patient's needs and toward a state-driven agenda that seeks to control reproductive choices. This move towards surveillance of personal health decisions is an infringement on personal freedom and could open the door to further restrictions on abortion access.

Reproductive health decisions should remain between individuals and their healthcare providers. When government intervention seeks to collect excessive data, it creates an environment where the autonomy of individuals is increasingly compromised in favor of state control. This violates the right to privacy and contradicts the belief that reproductive choices should be made free of coercion, surveillance, or judgment.

The NAPHSIS requirements represent an unnecessary and harmful intrusion into the privacy, autonomy, and healthcare access of individuals. Access to safe and legal abortion should be free from surveillance and restriction, allowing individuals to make the best decisions for their health and well-being without fear of judgment or government interference.

By opposing these data requirements, we uphold the values of privacy, autonomy, and equity in reproductive healthcare, ensuring that individuals continue to have access to the services they need in a safe and supportive environment. NAPHSIS itself says that the exact data reported is subject to jurisdictional laws. Maine can and should leave 22 MRSA §1596, sub§2 alone.

That reporting requirement alone is enough to vote "Ought Not To Pass". The other provisions of LD 682 are similarly disqualifying, giving prosecutors additional power to investigate, arrest, and prosecute people who provide necessary health care.

For the reasons provided above, MC-FFRF urges the committee to vote "Ought Not To Pass" regarding LD 682. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

-Ray Vensel, President