

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Committee on Judiciary—

My name is Mareisa Weil and I am a resident of Freedom, Maine. I am writing today to submit testimony in opposition to LD 253, LD 682, LD 886, LD 887, LD 975, LD 1007, and LD 1154, a suite of proposed laws to criminalize, stigmatize, and/or restrict access to abortion in our state.

I am fully aware that not everyone believes in abortion, but in my experience, the vast majority of people who are anti-abortion are so because of deeply held faith beliefs and convictions. I would never begrudge someone their right to choose not to have an abortion. But conversely, I do not want nor do I believe that it is right for the government to restrict my ability to easily access abortion care because of the faith convictions and beliefs of others.

Pregnancy is NOT a health neutral condition. Some complications associated with pregnancy include gestational diabetes, gestational hypertension, preeclampsia, hyperemesis gravidarum, placenta previa, and more. Some of these complications can quickly become extremely dangerous and even fatal to the pregnant person. Pregnancy can cause nausea, constipation, heartburn, and more. Birth can be beautiful and uncomplicated but it can also be traumatic, resulting in vaginal and anal tearing, emergency cesarean section, hemorrhage, or other complications. Postpartum can be one of the most dangerous times for new moms, who may experience heart issues, postpartum depression, and struggle with support.

I share all this information, hopefully which is common knowledge, because anti-abortion advocates seem to present every pregnancy as a health neutral blessing and act as though consent to sex equals consent to pregnancy. It is not. Even the best contraception, including IUDs and vasectomies, can have failure rates. And people are also free to choose less invasive forms of birth control, like condoms or natural family planning, that have even higher failure rates. And none of us should be compelled to carry a pregnancy that we don't want or that is unsafe for our bodies or circumstances.

Abortion is a safe, effective way to end a pregnancy, and the more widely available it is, the sooner people will be able to access it. Medication abortion is safe and procedural abortion is safe. Maine has done an excellent job ensuring equitable access to abortion and I thank all of you who have been a part of ensuring and expanding that access. As a mother of two beautiful boys, I recently had an abortion because I did not want to take on the risk to my body and health that the pregnancy was posing. My blood pressure was rapidly increasing, my body was profoundly uncomfortable, I was nauseous, I had no energy. While it was for me a difficult decision (in contrast to another abortion I had almost 20 years ago, which was not a difficult decision at all), as soon as I received my abortion, I felt profound physical and emotional relief. I knew my health would immediately improve and I would be able to go back to showing up for my boys, my partner, my work, in a more present way. The abortion care I received was informed by my knowledge and consent every step of the way and my provider and support staff were amazing. Everyone deserves the right to make that choice for themselves, free of stigma, judgment, and barriers imposed by the government.

Finally, there is an abundance of evidence that demonstrates increased maternal and infant mortality in states with restrictive abortion laws. I have embedded links in my testimony below but I encourage all of you to familiarize yourselves with the overwhelming research and evidence demonstrating harm caused by restricting access to abortion care.

<https://sph.tulane.edu/study-finds-higher-maternal-mortality-rates-states-more-abortion-restrictions>

<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2025/the-unequal-impacts-of-abortion-bans>

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10728320/>

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/amp/rcna171631>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c8d9z853jndo.amp>

So, thank you for hearing my testimony today. I know these bills are unlikely to move forward this session due to the strong current majority of reproductive rights supporters, thank goodness, but these harmful bills deserve a response (and will probably be back next session, too) and I am compelled to speak up. Thank you for listening, and I welcome any questions you might have.