

Sarah Young, CHES®

Augusta, Maine

03/27/2025

Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Sarah Young, and I am a concerned citizen of Augusta, writing to express my strong opposition to LD 253 - An Act to Prevent the MaineCare Program from Covering Abortion Services.

As a public health professional and steadfast advocate for women's rights, I have witnessed firsthand the profound challenges women face daily in accessing essential reproductive healthcare.

With the rising cost of living in Maine, restricting access to paid abortion services will undoubtedly have catastrophic consequences. Not only will this increase the number of children placed in the already-overburdened foster care system, but it will also lead to a significant rise in unsafe abortions. Those lacking the financial means or transportation to seek proper care will be forced into dangerous alternatives.

For women experiencing homelessness, single mothers struggling to make ends meet, survivors of sexual assault, and minors, the added burden of restricted access to reproductive care could be the difference between life and death.

As highlighted by the World Health Organization and National Institute of Health, "Every year, worldwide, about 42 million women with unintended pregnancies choose abortion, and nearly half of these procedures—20 million—are unsafe. Some 68,000 women die from unsafe abortions annually, making it one of the leading causes of maternal mortality (13%). Of the women who survive unsafe abortions, 5 million will suffer long-term health complications. Unsafe abortion is thus a pressing issue." (Haddad, L. B., & Nour, N. M. (2009). *Unsafe abortion: Unnecessary maternal mortality. Reviews in Obstetrics & Gynecology.*)

Abortion is healthcare—nothing more, nothing less. We must ask ourselves: at what point do we stand up and prioritize the well-being of our fellow citizens, rather than perpetuating harm? By supporting this bill, you are not just making a political decision; you are actively voting against the fundamental rights of women. You are voting against your mothers, your sisters, your daughters, your neighbors, your colleagues, and the very people you were elected to represent. It is time to choose compassion, justice, and care over division and harm.

I strongly urge you to reject this bill in the interest of protecting the health, safety, and well-being of Maine's women.

Sincerely,
Sarah Young, CHES®
Augusta, Maine