

Michelle Zagardo  
Bethel  
LD 1154

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee, My name is Michelle Zagardo and I am a constituent from Bethel.

I am writing to express my opposition to LD 1154, which would impose additional and unnecessary requirements on individuals seeking an abortion following a diagnosis of a lethal fetal anomaly. While perinatal hospice services can be a valuable option for some, mandating that healthcare providers present this information and requiring patients to certify in writing that they have received it places an undue burden on those already facing an incredibly difficult and personal decision. This bill assumes that individuals who receive a devastating fetal diagnosis are unaware of their options, which is both paternalistic and dismissive of the compassionate, evidence-based counseling already provided by medical professionals. Patients facing these situations are often well-informed and deeply engaged in discussions with their healthcare providers and loved ones. Legislating additional requirements does not serve the best interests of patients but rather imposes unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles that could delay care and add emotional distress. Moreover, the requirement that patients certify in writing that they have declined perinatal hospice services serves no legitimate medical or public health purpose. Instead, it functions as a coercive measure designed to shame individuals who choose abortion, creating additional psychological burdens during an already challenging time. Medical decisions, particularly those involving pregnancy complications, should be left to the patient and their healthcare provider without state-imposed mandates that serve only to stigmatize one course of action over another. Instead of imposing unnecessary obstacles on reproductive healthcare, the Legislature should focus on ensuring that all patients receive compassionate, patient-centered care that respects their autonomy and medical choices, and promote children-centered policies that support access to food, healthcare, education, and childcare, among other things. I urge you to reject this bill and support policies that uphold the dignity and decision-making capacity of individuals facing complex pregnancy decisions.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Michelle Zagardo