



Maine Women's Lobby

THE VOICE OF MAINE WOMEN

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Advocates Call Upon Lawmakers to Defend Current Maine Law** *Women's Health and Autonomy at Risk at the State House Today*

Augusta – In advance of likely votes on reproductive health, advocates and members of the Maine Choice Coalition—dressed in pink and wearing stickers saying “Trust Maine Women”—gathered today at the State House to lobby legislators to defend reproductive health and privacy. They urged lawmakers to reject L.D.’s 31, 116, 924, 1457, and 1463.

“There is nothing more fundamental to women’s full equality than having the right to make private healthcare decisions regarding her body and her future – in consultation with her family, her physician, and her inner beliefs,” said Carolyn Ladd, a resident of Augusta. She continued, “As a mother, a grand mother, and a great-grandmother, I am old enough to remember the time before *Roe v. Wade*, when women faced harsh decisions about whether to terminate a pregnancy. Putting barriers before women seeking abortion services in unwise, unfair, and unjust.”

The bills would, among other restrictions, make it more difficult for women, particularly low-income and rural women, to access abortion services. L.D. 1463 would create separate and distinct rights for fetuses in criminal law.

Dr. Jacob Gerritsen urged lawmakers to oppose this fetal homicide law, “This legal separation of a mother and her pregnancy is a major departure in Maine law, and will harm a doctor’s ability to provide care.”

Said Sarah Standiford, Executive Director of the Maine Women’s Lobby, “These bills are unnecessary: Maine already has a law enabling stiffer penalties for crimes against pregnant women. Maine law mandates adult involvement for minors, and requires informed consent about abortion care. These bills will do nothing to improve the health and well-being of women. Rather, they are an unwelcome distraction from what should be the Legislature’s primary focus right now – balancing the budget and creating jobs.”

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*Organizers of the event included Maine Choice Coalition steering committee members: The Family Planning Association of Maine, Mabel Wadsworth Women’s Health Center, Maine Civil Liberties Union, Maine Women’s Lobby, and Planned Parenthood of Northern New England*