



Maine Women's Lobby

THE VOICE OF MAINE WOMEN

May 18, 2021

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Harnett, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

I join you today on behalf of the Maine Women's Lobby. For over forty years, the Maine Women's Lobby has advocated for public policy which increases the health, wellness, safety, and economic security of Maine women and girls, with a focus on the most marginalized populations and communities.

We write today **in opposition to LD 1225, "An Act To Provide Dignity for Fetal Remains by Requiring Their Interment or Cremation."**

Part of our work at the Maine Women's Lobby is to bring the voices and experiences of women, girls, and all Mainers who experience gender-based discrimination into the Legislative process. To that end, I'm going to use my time to share my own story to help illustrate the potential affect of this bill on the lives of Mainers.

Several years ago, I was excited to find myself pregnant with our second child. As I entered my second trimester, my family and I drove down to my parent's house to give them the good news in person. Just before dinner, I started to feel uncomfortable, and then discovered I was spotting. Over dinner, I shared the news, and the physical update. We decided together to wait and see what the natural next steps would be.

Monday, I went to work as usual. I can perfectly remember the feeling of getting physically uncomfortable during a legislative hearing, and then going to the bathroom on the 4th floor to discover I was almost certainly going to lose the pregnancy. I drove home and there confirmed the reality. It ended up being about 10 days of messy and sometimes uncomfortable passing.

Once I conferred with my provider, I learned that the best approach was to do weekly blood testing to make sure that the pregnancy had fully passed. I did this for several weeks until the bills started to roll in. I had a \$3,000 deductible, and though I stopped the blood testing as soon as I discovered the expense, I was already an unexpected \$1,000 into the procedures.

That December, I discovered I was pregnant again. I started spotting again. I started to pass the pregnancy again. This time, it was 4 days before Christmas. I opted to have a D&C (the same procedure used in abortion to end a pregnancy or to manage a miscarriage) rather than spend another 10 days passing the pregnancy over the holiday with my four-year-old. A month later I got the bill for most of the rest of the \$2,000 for my insurance deductible.

When it happened a third time that spring, at least I knew to save the hassle and money of blood tests and called my local family planning provider for affordable options.



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That was a challenging 18 months in my life. The wild hormonal swings of early pregnancy and post-pregnancy made my life chemically chaotic – to say nothing of the inevitable grief, as well as the logistical burden of medical procedures and then medical bills.

Thankfully, I didn't also have to contend with needing to collect the scraps of my lost pregnancies for burial or cremation; manage schedules and services with burial or cremation vendors; or pay for those added expenses. Thankfully, I didn't also have to contend with the burden of the state telling me what my family experience should include or cost.

Regardless of whether people are managing abortion or miscarriage, the state should have no role in forcing added barriers, burdens, or expenses into that experience.

We hope you will vote 'ought not to pass' on LD 1225.

Sincerely,

Destie Hohman Sprague, Executive Director
Maine Women's Lobby / mainewomen.org