



Christian Civic League of Maine

Associated with Focus on the Family

Chairpersons Sanborn and Tepler, honored members of the Health Coverage Financial Services and Insurance Committee, my name is Carroll Conley, and I am the director of the Christian Civic League Maine. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak today in opposition to LD 820.

Back in 2015, when the abortion industry and the ACLU chose to sue the state of Maine and the Department of Health and Human Services to force Maine citizens to pay for abortions with their tax dollars, there was great concern among those of us who believe all human life is sacred. We wondered whether our Attorney General at the time, now Gov. Mills, would aggressively defend the HHS due to her well-known, pro-abortion personal stance.

During that case and subsequent appeals, due to loss after loss by the abortion industry, our concerns were allayed as Assistant Attorney General Susan Herman effectively and successfully defended Maine's long-standing, court-tested position not to fund abortions outside of the Hyde Amendment restrictions.

During those court proceedings, ACLU attorney, Zachary Heiden, made the assertion that the Hyde Amendment restrictions are the perfect example of a "burden without benefit." This is where we have a fundamental disagreement. Because we believe every human being, regardless of their age, the color of their skin, the size of their bank account, their last name, their country of birth, their gender, or how many chromosomes they have, bear the image of their Creator and therefore have intrinsic value regardless of whether they are wanted or not. Because of that value, the Supreme Court has ruled that making the distinction between live births and an abortion is not discriminating against women. In 1980 the Supreme Court said government has a perfectly legitimate reason to do so: "Abortion is inherently different from other medical procedures, because no other procedure involves the purposeful termination of a potential life." Harris, 448 U.S. at 325. Later the court dropped the confusing phrase "potential life," citing government's legitimate interest in promoting "respect for life, including life of the unborn." Gonzales v. Carhart, 550 U.S. 124, 158 (2007). **In other words, that burden does have a benefit: It saves innocent human lives.**

For years, through private conversations and now social media interactions, abortion proponents would declare in our exchanges, "If you don't like abortion, don't have one. No one is making you get an abortion or pay for an abortion." If LD 820 passes, that certainly will no longer be the case.

I urge the members of this committee to consider the rights of the majority of the citizens they represent who do not want to participate in the taking of innocent human life and the rights of family business owners whose convictions will force them not to offer medical benefits to their employees. Please honor the time-tested, court-approved compromise of the Hyde Amendment and vote "ought not to pass" for LD 820.