

Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services on LD 820: “An Act to Prevent Discrimination in Public and Private Insurance Coverage for Pregnant Women in Maine.”

March 27th, 2019

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 820: “An Act to Prevent Discrimination in Public and Private Insurance Coverage for Pregnant Women in Maine.”

My name is Rev. Nancee Campbell and I live in Augusta. I am here today on behalf of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN) as a person of faith committed to our shared belief that all of us have a human right to make unfettered decisions about our bodies, family, and reproductive futures.

Since 1963—ten years before abortions were legal in this country and before most other religious organizations—Unitarian Universalists have supported the rights of women and their freedom to make faithful choices about their bodies and families.

Not since the days of *Roe v. Wade* has the pro-choice community faced so much legislative opposition. Last year, an unprecedented ninety-two anti-abortion provisions were passed across the United States.

But those of us in Maine have an opportunity to reverse this trend by preventing discrimination in public and private insurance coverage for our state's pregnant women. And here are some of the reasons why:

Restrictions on insurance coverage are examples of how the abortion stigma gets woven into the fabric of our health care system, and they disproportionately impact poor people and pregnant People of Color, particularly Black women and transgender individuals.

If your health insurance plan covers prenatal care but not abortion care, it could unfairly impact your decision about whether or not to continue a pregnancy.

An abortion procedure in Maine can cost \$500+ and research shows that most people with both public and private insurance coverage would struggle with a \$500 medical expense. This means they would either have to forgo paying certain other bills

(rent, groceries, etc.), or be forced to disclose to someone in order to borrow money, or be unable to have their abortion at all.

Insurance restrictions primarily hurt low-income people who are on Medicaid/MaineCare or on private insurance plans with minimal coverage and/or high deductibles.

Our Unitarian Universalist faith calls on us to care deeply about the well-being of our neighbors, particularly those with the least material resources.

Decisions as profound as if and when to bring a child into the world and parent should not be shaped by forces as impersonal and profit-driven as insurance coverage. They are matters of the heart, and we should support all pregnant people in making the decisions best for their lives and the futures they are building toward.

For the reasons articulated above, the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network urges this committee to vote “Ought to Pass” for LD 820. Thank you for your consideration.