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SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

July 10, 2013

Penny Morrell  
Director  
PO Box 451  
Manchester, ME 04351-0451

Dear Penny:

Thank you for contacting me regarding H.R. 1797, the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. I appreciate hearing from you on this important issue.

H.R. 1797, modeled after state laws in Nebraska, Kansas, Idaho, Alabama and Oklahoma, would ban all abortion procedures 20 weeks post fertilization. In the past, this bill has been limited to the District of Columbia, but on June 4, 2013, the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Constitution and Civil Justice voted to make the proposed ban applicable nationwide.

Several bills, including H.R. 1797, have been introduced that would directly conflict with the Supreme Court's decision in Roe vs. Wade. As you know, that ruling legalized abortion up to the point where a fetus becomes viable, considered the third trimester in the Roe v. Wade decision. Despite deeply held views on both sides of this issue, Roe v. Wade is the law of the land. As such, legislation that seeks to go beyond the rights afforded to women by the Roe v. Wade decision would, in my opinion, be unconstitutional.

Similarly, other proposals have been introduced that seek to restrict or eliminate Title X programs. The Title X program provides public funding for family planning and preventive health screening services, and it provides supplies and information to those that are in need. Title X is a significant source of funding for family planning clinics throughout the United States, and it is important in providing reproductive health care services. Title X projects also offer pregnant women factual information concerning prenatal care and delivery, infant care and foster care or adoption. Title X not only benefits millions of Americans each year, but also serves important public health goals.

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We all share the goal of reducing the number of unintended pregnancies in this country. While I generally support a ban on federal funding of abortions except in cases defined under federal law, I have consistently supported both federal and state appropriations for family planning and have opposed efforts to strip Planned Parenthood of its federal funding.

On June 18, 2013, I voted against H.R. 1797, which passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 228 to 196. The bill was subsequently received in the Senate and referred to the Judiciary Committee. Please know that I will keep your thoughtful comments in mind as this bill continues to make its way through the legislative process.

Thank you again for sharing your views with me. In addition, I also provide occasional email updates on a range of issues affecting people in Maine. If you would like to receive this information, please visit my website at <https://michaud.house.gov/contact-mike/newsletter> and sign up for my email newsletter. I appreciate the opportunity to represent Maine in Congress.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike", written over a horizontal line.

Michael H. Michaud  
Member of Congress