



Testimony in Support of LD 1948

An Act To Prohibit, Except in Emergency Situations, the Performance without Consent of Pelvic Examinations on Unconscious or Anesthetized Patients

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, my name is Angelica Katz, and I'm pleased to submit testimony in support of L.D. 1948, on behalf of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England.

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England provides comprehensive reproductive and sexual health care to more than 12,000 people in Maine at four health centers located in Biddeford, Portland, Sanford and Topsham. People turn to us for affordable, high-quality care including wellness exams, birth control, disease testing and treatment, and cancer screenings as well as a variety of primary care services. We see everyone who comes to us regardless of ability to pay. Last year, we provided more than \$4 million in free and discounted care to our patients in Maine. For many, we are their only access to the health care system.

We support this legislation because no patient should ever have a reason to not trust their medical provider and what has been done to their body while unconscious. The practice of performing non-consensual pelvic exams on unconscious or anesthetized patients is an unethical and abusive practice preventing patients from making informed decisions over their bodily autonomy. This practice can be especially triggering for survivors of sexual violence and trauma. Additionally, it is important that while having these conversations, we include our transgender community and men who require routine pelvic examinations.

At Planned Parenthood, our values are deeply rooted in the ability for every patient to have the right to control what happens to their body and the freedom to make informed decisions about their health.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to join other states who have already passed similar legislation and take every step necessary to ensure our medical providers meet the highest ethical standards and codify banning pelvic examinations without consent in Maine.