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Maine Family Planning
Testimony in Opposition to
LD 494, An Act to Conform State Funding to the Federal Hyde Amendment,
Limiting Funding for Some Abortion Services
May 5, 2023

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, Maine Family Planning is testifying today in opposition to LD 494, An Act to Conform State Funding to the Federal Hyde Amendment, Limiting Funding for Some Abortion Services. LD 494 would take away healthcare coverage for Mainers who need abortions, undermining their economic security and jeopardizing their future.

Maine Family Planning provides comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care, including abortions, at 18 locations statewide. Insurance coverage bans and restrictions have no basis in medicine, but they can have profound negative effects on people's wellbeing.

A 2009 report by the Guttmacher Institute and Ibis Reproductive Health estimated that [one in four](#) poor women in the U.S. is forced to carry an unwanted pregnancy because she can't afford abortion care. These figures will grow in a post-Roe country. The groundbreaking [Turnaway Study](#) conducted at the University of California, San Francisco, shows that denying a woman a wanted abortion -- including by telling a patient that the care they need isn't covered by their insurance -- creates long-term economic hardship, exacerbating financial insecurities and presenting a host of challenges not just to the patient but to their children as well.

Insurance bans hurt patients and delay access to time-sensitive care. Poorer patients can be forced to delay their abortion procedure for as long as [two to three weeks](#) while they raise money. If a person ends up being unable to obtain an abortion altogether, they are more likely to experience pregnancy complications than someone with a planned pregnancy. We don't have to look far for evidence of how these restrictions harm Maine people -- and how lifting them made a meaningful difference for our fellow Mainers. When similar legislation to LD 494 was introduced in the 130th session, one young woman testified about the impact this coverage had on her life: "Because of my access to abortion care, I will be able to finish school this summer and enter the work force, following my dreams, and be able to start a family if and when I am ready. Today I do not only speak for myself; my story is only one echo of the generations of women simply wanting the freedom to choose their own future with dignity. At your hands is the opportunity to continue throwing life preservers, so please don't let us drown." We urge the committee to reference [the brave young woman's testimony](#) as you consider yet another bill about denying MaineCare members coverage for abortion care.

Since our state law ensuring equitable coverage for abortion care under public and private insurance plans went into effect in 2019, people are better off. We've heard the exhales of relief on the phone when patients come to understand the care they need will be covered. This means they can schedule their appointment sooner and with more flexibility. It means one less bill to cover for those who are already struggling to make ends meet.

At this moment, when we are more aware than ever of all the troubling inequities within our healthcare

system, it just doesn't make sense to hold back coverage from someone who is eligible and in need -- or to realign Maine law with outdated federal policy aimed at make it as difficult as possible for poor people, especially people of color, to make their own decisions about their pregnancies. The Hyde Amendment was introduced soon after Roe v. Wade was decided and its intentions were clear. Representative Henry Hyde, the amendment's main proponent, said "I would certainly like to prevent, if I could legally, anybody having an abortion: a rich woman, a middle-class woman, or a poor woman. Unfortunately, the only vehicle available is the... Medicaid bill." The Hyde amendment is a racist, classist, sexist piece of archaic policy that, despite our strong state-level protections, continues to restrict access to abortion care in Maine for service members and veterans insured through TRICARE, tribal citizens who receive health care through IHS, and others with federally funded insurance. Hyde is completely out of step with Maine values.

Mainers' access to care should never depend on where they live, how much money they make, or what type of insurance they have. On behalf of Maine Family Planning and our patients, I urge the committee to reject LD 494.