

Aspen Ruhlin
Mabel Wadsworth Center
LD 163

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LD 163 Public Testimony

My name is Aspen Ruhlin, and I am delivering public testimony today as a representative of Mabel Wadsworth Center in Bangor. I would first like to thank the chairs Senator Bailey and Representative Mathieson, along with the rest of the members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee. I would also like to thank Representative Arford for sponsoring this bill, and the many cosponsors who have cosponsored as well. Mabel Wadsworth Center is a sexual and reproductive health center that has been serving our part of the state for 40 years. Unsurprisingly, contraceptive care is an important service we provide. Our center has first-hand experience in helping people navigate the many barriers they may face with accessing contraception. Today, we are asking you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 163.

This bill seeks to require private health insurance to cover over the counter contraception options without cost-sharing to members. This would be immensely beneficial for Mainers, especially those who may struggle to afford contraceptives out-of-pocket or who aren’t able to find a provider to prescribe contraception, an increasingly common issue with the current healthcare provider shortage in the state. This bill was inspired by the FDA approval of the first over the counter hormonal birth control pill—a safe, effective contraceptive method that improves access to essential healthcare. While access to this specific contraceptive method is enough reason to advocate, this bill goes further and also includes non-prescription emergency contraception. Emergency contraception can be an important tool for preventing pregnancy, and is kept out of reach for many by cost.

LD 163 seeks to make more contraception options available to Mainers, allowing people to access what is right for them. We at Mabel Wadsworth Center urge you to vote “ought to pass” on this bill. Thank you.