

Senator Pierce, Representative Cloutier, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Stephanie Mindykowski. I am a resident of Rockland and am testifying in support of LD 143. I submit these remarks as a member of the Unitarian Universalist faith tradition, which affirms and promotes justice, equity and compassion in human relations, and the inherent worth and dignity of every person. I am also one of the 500 members of the Maine UU State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN), which links Maine's 26 UU congregations in working for legislation that embodies those values.

I believe LD 143 should become law because the current administration of the federal government is threatening to restrict or suspend federal funding for social services, including funding for services related to reproductive rights and family planning. In addition, sexually-transmitted infections and HIV cases continue to increase. And with funds already limited, those in rural communities are being underserved, as opposed to those in cities such as Portland and Bangor; for many of these, it would be a long drive in situations where a local clinic is not available.

LD 143 would help improve funding opportunities for family planning clinics and organizations, which would be used to improve such services and make them more available to Mainers, whether urban or rural.

For all these reasons, in light of current situations, family planning services need all the help they can get. Therefore, I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 143.

Thank you,

Stephanie Mindykowski