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Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier in support of

**LD 143, An Act to Improve Women's Health and Economic Security by
Funding Family Planning Services**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Kristen Cloutier, and I represent House District 94, which includes part of my hometown of Lewiston. I am submitting this testimony in support of **LD 143, An Act to Improve Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family Planning Services**.

I firmly believe everyone should have access to high-quality, affordable sexual and reproductive health services in their communities, regardless of race, income, citizenship status, insurance type, religious beliefs or gender identity. This bill helps ensure that access remains intact for Mainers, even amid healthcare consolidation and shifting corporate priorities.

The importance of this bill cannot be overstated in our current political climate. Sexual and reproductive healthcare services have become unnecessarily politicized, jeopardizing fundamental health services for thousands of Maine residents. As the parent of a teenager, I've had to seriously consider the implications this could have on my own child's reproductive health, rights and freedoms, as we bear witness to how quickly they can be eroded in other states. We must remain vigilant and take protective action now before these essential services are compromised.

LD 143 would provide ongoing appropriations of \$6,180,000 in each year of the biennium from the General Fund to be distributed by the Department of Health and Human Services to a single grantee. This grantee will provide crucial management and oversight for statewide family planning services. Additionally, the bill establishes the Fund to Maintain Access to Statewide Family Planning Services within the department, creating a stable foundation for these vital healthcare services.

The benefits of comprehensive family planning extend far beyond reproductive health—they significantly contribute to economic security, educational attainment and workplace equality for women and families across Maine. When people can plan their families and access necessary healthcare, they more fully participate in education, the workforce and civic life.

In my district, countless constituents rely on these services for their basic healthcare needs. For many, especially in rural and underserved areas, family planning providers are their primary healthcare source. Without these providers, many Mainers would have nowhere else to turn.

I urge this committee to recognize the importance of LD 143. By supporting this legislation, you will make a powerful statement that Maine values the health, autonomy and economic security of all its residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.