

Betsy Williams  
Brunswick  
LD 143

Good morning Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Betsy Williams, I live in Brunswick, and I am speaking in support of LD 143, An Act to Improve Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family Planning Services.

As a member of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN), I come before you today to testify that not all people of faith are opposed to family planning. In fact, there's a core tenet of all major religions—Western and Eastern—that's operative in this deliberation. You know it—the Golden Rule—the call to love one's neighbor as oneself.

It is love of neighbor that compels me to speak up when the basic rights and protections of our most vulnerable citizens are threatened. LD 143 addresses such a threat by prioritizing the funding necessary to provide essential health services to women who are otherwise unable to access them. Without preventative annual exams and screenings, women are vulnerable to a host of treatable illnesses including cervical cancer, HIV and STIs. Without family planning services, men, women and children are all vulnerable to greater economic hardship due to untreated illness and unplanned pregnancies.

Every woman in Maine deserves access to core preventative health measures, life-saving cancer screenings, and protection against unplanned pregnancies. Every woman in Maine deserves to be given the opportunity for a healthy life. Every woman in Maine deserves to be treated with the same respect you would treat the women in your own life. "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Please do not abandon Maine's most vulnerable women. Vote yes on LD 143 and use the power that only you our state legislators have, to assure that funding these services will continue. Thank you.