

Rachel Faith
Milbridge
LD 143

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Rachel Faith, I live in Milbridge, and I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 143.

As I was entering adulthood, I realized that, for a number of personal reasons, having children was not meant to be a part of my life. I have put a lot of thought into contraception as part of my healthcare planning over the years, and in 2018, I decided that the best option for me would be to get an IUD. I was shocked to discover, though, that the device and the insertion procedure would cost over \$1,000 if my insurance didn't cover it, which was more than I could afford. Although I was very fortunate to have good insurance at the time and was able to get the IUD, this isn't something I can necessarily count on in the future: I'm self-employed, and therefore have to manage all of the costs involved in an individual health insurance policy while navigating the unpredictable ups and downs of freelance work. I could easily end up in a position where I can't afford a health insurance policy, and might be forced to forgo not only future IUD replacements, but also critical healthcare procedures such as my regular wellness exams, gynecological exams and cancer screenings in order to be able to buy groceries and make my student loan payments on time.

When faced with these uncertainties, it is a comfort to know that Maine has a family planning care network to turn to when times are tough. This network ensures that people all across our state can get the care they need, when they need it and regardless of their ability to pay, and helps Mainers detect cancer early, treat infections before they become severe or spread to others, and build healthy families. Tens of thousands of Mainers use our family planning care network every year, and it's clear that people here value this system: in spite of the attacks against family planning and reproductive services at the federal level, Mainers have continued to support a pro-reproductive rights majority in the state legislature. With the aggression continuing to intensify at the federal level, it's more important than ever that our state government stand up and take action to protect and support these crucial healthcare services that the people of Maine so clearly need and value.

Family planning can take many forms and mean many different things to the people who use it. For me, it means having reliable and affordable access to effective birth control and important exams and screenings so I can stay healthy and active in the lives of my family, friends and neighbors. For other people I know, it means having access to the care and support they need in order to bring children into their lives at the right time and be healthy and happy parents to those children in the years to come, or accessing affordable primary care procedures without having to cut other essentials out of their budgets. For all of us, however, it is a fundamental part of having control over our bodies, our health and the course of our lives--a fundamental part of our human dignity. None of us should have this dignity taken away from us, least of all because we aren't rich enough or because a very small group of very wealthy people in Washington doesn't believe we deserve it. For the wellbeing of myself and all the people of Maine, I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 143. Thank you.