



SAFE Maine

Statement of Abbie Strout-Bentes, Executive Director, SAFE Maine to the Health and Human Services Committee in support of LD 143: An Act to Improve Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family Planning Services

March 10, 2025

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

I am submitting testimony of behalf of Safe Abortions For Everyone, also known as SAFE Maine; we are Maine's abortion fund. We urge committee members to vote in favor of LD 143: An Act to Improve Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family Planning Services.

Our mission is to provide financial support to individuals traveling to, living in, or from Maine who need assistance paying for their abortion and associated costs, such as transportation, lodging, childcare, and lost wages. We provide funding for people who are uninsured, those whose insurance doesn't cover abortion care, and people who are unable to use their insurance. Mainers who need abortion care, particularly those who depend on our funding for care, also need access to free or reduced cost sexual and reproductive healthcare services provided by Maine's family planning network. We believe that bodily autonomy is a human right, and when individuals can access essential and basic health care services at family planning care sites across the state they are able to make decisions about their bodies and futures.

Funding Maine's family planning network is a key part of building the future we believe in and one that all Mainers' deserve. A future where all of us - no matter our income or what part of the state we live in - are able to get the healthcare we need, close to home and with healthcare providers we trust. Their network ensures annually that over 30,000 Mainers are able to access the sexual and reproductive health care they need. These services allow us to plan our families and futures, get tested and treated for sexually transmitted infections, and receive gender-affirming care, our annual cancer screenings, and other preventative care. With a half-century of experience and 60 locations across our state, the family planning network is a trusted lifeline in our communities. For many individuals who get their care within the family planning network, it is their only source of healthcare annually, highlighting the network's significant impact on public health and individual well-being.

It is already too hard to get healthcare in our state, and if family planning care is not funded, the consequences will be devastating for communities, resulting in fewer people receiving care. Now is the time to invest in the health and wellness of Maine's communities by supporting LD 143.

Sincerely,

Abbie Strout-Bentes

