



**To the Joint Standing Committee on Health & Human Services**

**Testimony in Support of LD 143, An Act to Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family Planning Services**

**March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer, and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Jakob Giron, Policy Advocate at Consumers for Affordable Health Care. We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that advocates the right to quality, affordable health care for every person in Maine. As designated by Maine's Attorney General, CAHC serves as Maine's Health Insurance Consumer Assistance Program.

Our toll-free helpline fielded nearly 7,300 calls and emails last year from people across Maine needing help with their private healthcare or with accessing affordable healthcare services, including family planning services. CAHC also serves as the Ombudsman program for Maine's Medicaid program, MaineCare, and helps people apply for and navigate the enrollment process for MaineCare. It is with this background that we provide these comments in full support of LD 143, An Act to Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family Planning Services.

Maine family planning providers serve over 31,000 patients annually across 53 health centers. These providers often are the only source of care for their patients, delivering essential services such as STI testing, cancer screening, gynecological exams, behavioral health services, and even primary care. Without adequate funding, Mainers could lose access to these critical services, putting the health and well-being of thousands at risk.

The urgency of LD 143 cannot be overstated, as family planning providers are facing increasing financial strain. Meanwhile, federal policies threaten to further destabilize access to reproductive healthcare. By passing this bill, the Legislature can make sure that all Mainers, regardless of income or geography, continue to have access to the care they need.

We thank you for your time and encourage you to support LD 143, which will bring relief and better health to Maine families and communities.