

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

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Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is James Myall. I’m a policy analyst at the Maine Center for Economic Policy and I’m writing to you in support of LD 143, “An Act to Improve Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family Planning Services.” MECEP supports LD 143 because access to health care services, including family planning services, is foundational to Mainers’ economic success.

Maine’s network of family planning service providers see tens of thousands of patients each year, the majority of whom are living on low incomes and have few other options for basic health care services.¹ In addition to addressing sexual health needs, they also provide a broader range of services that include cancer screenings, routine exams, and vaccinations.

Research shows that access to contraceptive services is particularly valuable for women, and the ability to make informed choices about their reproductive futures leads to better college graduation rates, better participation in the work force, higher wages, and less likelihood of living in poverty.² Reproductive freedom also means better outcomes during pregnancy and birth, resulting in fewer cases of preterm and low-weight births, which can have lifelong health and developmental impacts for children.

Funding family planning services is also a good use of public funds. One study found that for every dollar spent on such services, taxpayers saved \$7 in avoidable costs to taxpayers.³ On top of these are indirect costs to Mainers with private insurance plans – investing in preventative care services reduces insurance premiums because it means fewer visits by Mainers to the emergency room and fewer diagnoses of acute conditions which could have been spotted and fixed much earlier at a lower cost.

In order to promote healthy Mainers and a strong Maine economy, MECEP urges you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 143. Please reach out to me with any questions at jmyall@mecep.org

¹ US Department of Health and Human Services, “Family Planning Annual Report: 2023 National Summary.” Sept 2024. <https://opa.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2024-10/2023-FPAR-National-Summary-Report.pdf>

² Anna Bernstein and Kelly Jones, “THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF CONTRACEPTIVE ACCESS: A Review Of The Evidence.” *Institute for Women’s Policy Research*. https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/B381_Contraception-Access_Final.pdf

³ Frost, J. J., Sonfield, A., Zolna, M. R., & Finer, L. B. (2014). “Return on investment: a fuller assessment of the benefits and cost savings of the US publicly funded family planning program.” *The Milbank quarterly*, 92(4), 696–749. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0009.12080>