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Senator Anne Carney
Representative Amy Kuhn
Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

May 19, 2025

RE: Testimony opposing LD 1873, "An Act to Require Age Verification for Online Obscene Matter"

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

Maine Family Planning urges you to oppose LD1873, "An Act to Require Age Verification for Online Obscene Matter."

Maine Family Planning (MFP) provides comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care to teens and adults at 19 locations statewide. Our mission is to ensure that all people have access to high-quality, culturally relevant and affordable sexual and reproductive health care services, comprehensive sexual health education, and the right to control their sexual and reproductive lives.

MFP's Prevention Program promotes sexual and reproductive health among young Mainers by working with schools and community organizations to provide comprehensive sex education that is medically accurate, age-appropriate, and affirming for people of all identities. We are deeply committed to promoting sexual and reproductive health among youth and families.

Maine Law and Maine's Learning Results standards require medically accurate and age-appropriate [comprehensive family life education](#). [Research shows](#) that [comprehensive sexual health education works](#), empowering youth to make healthy, informed, and responsible decisions about their bodies and relationships. Furthermore, sharing age-appropriate information about body parts, anatomy, and consent can help protect children from sexual abuse. Comprehensive and inclusive sex ed is [critical](#) to improve the lives and wellbeing of all young people.

Maine has had a long history of providing comprehensive sexuality education. Maine Family Planning education staff works closely with the Maine Department of Education and educators statewide to implement [evidence-based teaching materials](#) such as *Puberty Happens* for youth in grades 4-6; the *Middle School Scope and Sequence*, designed to meet sexual health standards for grades 6-8; and our *Best Practices in STI/HIV and Pregnancy Prevention* for youth aged 13-18. These curricula are factual, inclusive, and align with state and national health education standards, teaching concepts ranging from bodily autonomy and consent to STI/HIV prevention and

relationship safety. Our work is based on the belief that young people achieve brighter, healthier futures when they have the knowledge and skills to navigate sexual and relational issues.

But we fear legislation such as LD 1873 would jeopardize access to these educationally important materials and foster fear among educators and librarians who make them available, as well as sexual and reproductive health providers such as ourselves. This bill risks contributing to further stigmatizing of sex education and other topics that young people have a right to explore in a way that is age-appropriate, supported, and normalized at home and at school.

As experts in this field, we know that young people deserve access to more information about their bodies and relationships from reliable sources – not less. Limiting young people's access to materials that help them grapple with their bodies, development, and relationships does them a deep disservice.

LD 1873 is a misguided affront to free speech and public health, ripped from a national playbook. We urge the Committee to reject this proposal. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Olivia Pennington
Director of Advocacy & Community Engagement
Maine Family Planning