

### **Testimony in Support of LD 335: An Act to Safeguard Reproductive Rights**

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Esteemed Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Cait Vaughan, and I am a Portland resident and a full-spectrum doula submitting testimony in strong support of LD 335.

The myriad health services provided through the statewide family planning network of 60+ sites form the cornerstone of health and lifelong well-being for low-income Mainers. At various points in my working life, I have been unable to access insurance and unable to pay for most healthcare out of pocket; but Maine Family Planning was always there for me. I was able to receive birth control to manage chronic pain, nausea, and massive bleeding caused by endometriosis, and I received my first trauma-informed pelvic exams there. As a survivor of multiple forms of sexual trauma, this was life changing. It is not just the services that these providers offer that is important, it is also the highly skilled, compassionate, and nonjudgmental care that patients have come to expect from them.

When I work with clients expecting children and we discuss their goals around future family-building, it is their closest family planning clinics that I refer them to for care. This is not only because these are the community-level options for low-income and working-class Mainers, but also because of the high quality and trusted care I know they will receive there.

Sexual and reproductive health care is essential to well-being across our reproductive years and beyond. When we shutter clinics that offer low barriers services in STI testing and treatment, we guarantee more outbreaks like the one currently being fought by MFP—among other providers—in Penobscot County. When there are no safe places to go for regular screenings, we see young people who are sicker and do not detect cancers early on enough to best fight the disease in their bodies.

The investment of state funds into maintaining and more deeply sustaining our statewide family planning network is more than worthwhile—our state's public health depends upon it. I urge you to please move us towards a healthier Maine by voting Ought To Pass on LD 335.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Cait Vaughan', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Cait Vaughan  
Portland, Maine