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Public Testimony
LD 335: An Act to Safeguard Reproductive Rights

My name is Aspen Ruhlin, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Mabel Wadsworth Center. First, I would like to thank the chairs of the Health and Human Services Committee, Senator Ingwersen and Representative Meyer, along with the other members of the Committee for reading this testimony. Additionally, I would like to thank Representative Kuhn for sponsoring this bill.

For those who may not know, Mabel Wadsworth Center is an independent feminist sexual and reproductive health center that has been serving Bangor and the surrounding area since 1984 through a spectrum of healthcare services, education, and advocacy. Given our work, we have a deep understanding of the importance of reproductive rights and access to reproductive care, and we urge you to vote in support of LD 335.

As an independent clinic, we neither seek nor receive state or federal funding. While our organization would not directly benefit from this bill, we firmly support LD 335 because we know that the people of Maine will benefit. Planned Parenthood and Maine Family Planning have faced unprecedented federal attacks to their funding for essential health services, threatening the health of Maine people. The full spectrum of sexual and reproductive care is essential not just for individuals to live healthy, happy lives, but for the existence of healthy communities.

Mainers benefit from laws that protect legal access to the essential care provided not only at Mabel Wadsworth Center, but at Maine Family Planning and Planned Parenthood as well. That legal access will be meaningless if Mainers can't access care because their trusted healthcare providers are forced to close due to a lack of funding. While this bill looks at funding essential services that are important on their own like contraception, sexually transmitted infection (STI)

testing/treatment, and cancer screenings, we know that these federal attacks on funding have focused on abortion care.

Abortion is important in its own right, and attacks on abortion and the autonomy of pregnant people are unconscionable. We know that these attacks also harm those who are not seeking and may never seek abortion care. All examples of sexual and reproductive care that someone may need are essential, and they are all inexorably linked. Mainers need access to care with trusted, compassionate providers in their communities that centers their autonomy, regardless of what that care is. Mainers need our leaders to safeguard reproductive rights and access to care by funding these essential services. We at Mabel Wadsworth Center urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 335. Thank you.