



Maine People's Alliance

Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Esther Pew. I am a senior organizer at the Maine People's Alliance. Our 32,000 members are committed to creating a world where everyone has what they need, contributes what they can, and no one is left behind. Thank you for the opportunity today to speak to you in support of LD 335: An Act to Safeguard Reproductive Rights.

As an organizer, I spend my day talking with MPA members and others in the community. When I ask them what issues are most important to them, health care access continues to rise to the top. This especially includes reproductive health care. With attacks on reproductive care continuing at the federal level, slashing budgets for necessary organizations and services, it is the responsibility of our state to step up and make sure all Mainers are able to access the care they need.

I'll tell you - being pregnant is scary. I'm days away from my third trimester (this Friday, actually!). This is a planned pregnancy, but it doesn't mean I haven't spent much of it scared or worried about test results or other complications when it comes to my care or the care needed for my future child. An invoice from just one of these tests was over \$500 - and that is with my employer provided insurance kicking in! Everyone, regardless of ability to pay, needs access to high quality prenatal and family planning health care. Those who provide abortion services must have full funding because it makes it easier for everyone to get their healthcare needs met. We can have strong laws protecting reproductive rights, but we also need to make sure that everyone is able to access the care they need.

I'm one of the many over the years who has gotten necessary care from a Maine reproductive health care provider. I benefited by getting medically necessary pap smears, STI testing, vaccines, and more. Without Planned Parenthood and other providers like them, I would have been out hundreds if not thousands of dollars getting this necessary preventative care. Knowing that these agencies have been cut so deep by a federal government that is essentially targeting them because they provide abortion care is deeply frustrating and angering.

Through LD 335, we have the opportunity to ensure that patients from across the state can continue to access essential health care at Maine's reproductive health care providers despite the federal attacks that continue. We must protect access to care for the most vulnerable people in Maine now and into the future. By offsetting the funding hole created by the federal government, creating an emergency state funding mechanism to provide funding for patient care, and earmarking ongoing funding to reproductive health care providers, Maine can continue to lead the nation.

Thank you.