

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, our names are Madison Guay, Rose Paadam, Roshni Babal, and Srividya Alisetty, we live in Portland, and we urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 335, An Act to Safeguard Reproductive Rights.

We are second year medical students who have long dreamed of becoming doctors to be able to take care of people, advocate for them, encourage them to achieve their goals, and help them attain happier and healthier lives. We have been brought together by medical school and also our shared interests in advocating for reproductive rights and bodily autonomy. As students passionate about health equity and eliminating barriers to receiving reproductive health care, we are concerned about federal funding cuts to family planning care in Maine and the dangerous consequences to the health and well-being of so many in our communities. The threats to a person's right to an abortion through defunding and political attacks on reproductive health is troubling, and we believe these issues need to be addressed immediately. As students with aspirations to practice reproductive care in the future, it is unnerving and disheartening to think that we may not be able to apply our years of training to provide necessary care due to federal funding cuts in states such as Maine.

Throughout our medical education, we have learned more about the differing forms of health care offered in the state, including family planning care. Family planning care providers' commitment to providing affordable, accessible, and comprehensive reproductive and sexual health care to all is a mission we believe all health care systems should aspire to. The Maine family planning care network is crucial for improving access to care. Due to financial and logistical challenges of accessing a provider, especially in more rural areas of Maine, a visit at one of these facilities is often the only time patients who utilize their services will see a provider in an entire year. With demands for free and reduced health care growing, costs for delivering care increasing, and reimbursement rates remaining stagnant or insufficient, funding for family planning services is more pressing than ever before to ensure that those facing barriers to accessing the necessary services can continue to receive care for reproductive health. The value of family planning care should not be underestimated for the reasons stated, as the family planning care network is a critical safety net for tens of thousands of patients who seek care solely from these institutions.

LD 335 would ensure that patients can access the care they need at reproductive health care providers, regardless of the current attacks on abortion rights and reproductive and sexual health care from the federal government. This bill would help safeguard Maine's family planning network so the most vulnerable people can access necessary care when they need it.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 335. Thank you.