

Ashley Brown
Richmond
LD 335

Good morning, thank you for your consideration of my testimony. Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, I'm Ashley Brown, I live in Richmond, and I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 335

Reproductive care and the people who seek it out have been experiencing nation and statewide attacks. Maine has the power to help mitigate this onslaught of cruelty. As a state, I like to think that we have always been about the people- and the people of this state need access to the critical care family planning services offer.

Reproductive care and family planning services are a wide and necessary network of health that would leave a dangerous gap if funding continues to be cut. Maine is a state that has an already precarious relationship with access to healthcare- hospitals closing, primary care offices full, and loooong drives to larger offices with more comprehensive care. Additionally, healthcare costs keep rising, adding pressure to already hard pressed Maine residents. In an entire year, many individuals only see a family planning/etc provider due to some of these barriers. LD 335 would help protect Maine's network of family planning services so that the people who need it most can still access the healthcare they need.

As a college student, there was no way myself nor any of my friends could have afforded to have a child- we could barely afford the family planning methods we were using as it was. I have a friend who had to drive nearly two hours to see a provider to get the birth control of their choice implanted at a discount rate. This would only become more frequent without funding for family planning services. I have another friend who needed STI/STD testing and was uninsured at the time-Maine's family planning network helped them get the testing and medication they needed without putting them in debt. These are two wonderful individuals whose lives would've been impeded without this kind of healthcare.

I have been fortunate enough to have excellent health insurance most of my life. Family planning services have never been a question for me- something I am eternally grateful for. I want this some peace of mind for those who are currently uninsured, underinsured, or just want family planning services.

We have a urgent need and a duty to protect the residents of Maine, and LD 335 is an opportunity to do so. Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 335. Thank you.