



February 25, 2026

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

I join you today on behalf of the Maine Women's Lobby. For almost fifty years, the Maine Women's Lobby has worked to build gender justice in Maine through legislative advocacy and systems change.

We are here today **in support of LD 335, An Act to Protect Funding for Family Planning Services**, and thank Representative Kuhn for sponsoring this important bill.

The statewide network of Maine Family Planning and Planned Parenthood of Northern New England clinics provide the sexual health and primary care safety net across our state, serving tens of thousands of Mainers each year. Funding for these essential public health services has historically been a mix of state and federal streams, but escalating attacks on reproductive freedom at the federal level led by anti-abortion extremists in Congress and the Trump administration have thrown us into precarious times.

While reproductive health care and abortion remains legal in Maine due to robust state laws, Mainer's ability to *exercise* their right to comprehensive reproductive healthcare is being restricted in practice through a federal-level targeted defunding of providers.

In July 2025, Congress passed the budget bill **H.R. 1**, which included a one-year ban on reproductive health care providers who offer abortion care receiving federal Medicaid reimbursement for *non-abortion* services, including birth control, cancer screenings, and other lifesaving care. The impacts of this policy have already been felt: Maine Family Planning has ended primary care services in Houlton, Ellsworth, and Presque Isle, communities where access to health care was already limited. Since the beginning of 2025, nearly 50 Planned Parenthood-affiliated health centers nationwide have closed.¹ Each closure widens disparities in access to abortion and reproductive health care, particularly for rural communities and people without the means to

¹ Martinez, G. (2025, November 12). *New Report Shows Immediate Harms of "Defunding" Planned Parenthood*. Plannedparenthood.org; National - PPFPA.
<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/newsroom/press-releases/new-report-shows-immediate-harms-of-defunding-planned-parenthood>

travel long distances. **This policy cuts off access to critical care for marginalized populations such as BIPOC, rural women, young people, and trans and queer communities.**²

A stable, statewide network of reproductive health care providers is essential to ensuring that access is not determined by zip code. This is especially true in Maine, one of the most rural states in the country, where many communities already face care shortages - when even one clinic reduces services or closes, the impact reverberates across entire regions, forcing patients to travel hours for care, delay time-sensitive services like abortion, or forgo care altogether. **Sustained and reliable state investment is critical to maintaining a geographically distributed network that ensures people in rural and underserved communities can access reproductive health care close to home, safely and without undue burden.**

LD 335 is a critical and timely response. It would help ensure that the right to reproductive health care, including abortion, is not merely protected in statute but accessible in reality, especially for those most impacted by systemic inequities. The bill would guarantee **ongoing funding beginning in 2027** to support patient access to care statewide, stabilizing the providers that serve Maine's most vulnerable communities.

This bill would also create emergency state funding pathways for reproductive health care providers in the event of further cuts or prohibitions to Medicaid or Title X. This safeguard is especially urgent given anti-abortion lawmakers' announced plans to permanently defund abortion providers through upcoming federal budget reconciliation efforts.

Reproductive freedom is inseparable from racial justice, economic justice, and gender justice. LD 335 affirms Maine's commitment to bodily autonomy, medical integrity, and the dignity of all people, especially those who have historically been denied equitable care.

We urge you to vote **Ought to Pass** on **LD 335**.

Lily Bohem James

Maine Women's Lobby

² Kheyfets, A., Dhaurali, S., Feyock, P., Khan, F., Lockley, A., Miller, B., & Amutah-Onukagha, N. (2023). The impact of hostile abortion legislation on the United States maternal mortality crisis: a call for increased abortion education. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11(1291668). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1291668>