



**Testimony in support of LD 616, An Act to Protect Health Care Professions Providing  
Reproductive Health Care Services**

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, my name is Nicole Clegg, I serve as the Acting CEO at Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, and I am pleased to submit testimony in support of LD 616

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England provides comprehensive reproductive and sexual health care to more than 14,000 people in Maine at four health centers located in Biddeford, Portland, Sanford and Topsham. People turn to us for affordable, high-quality care including wellness exams, birth control, disease testing and treatment, cancer screenings, abortion care as well as a variety of primary care services. We see everyone who comes to us regardless of ability to pay, and in a typical year, provide more than \$4 million in free and discounted care to our communities in Maine.

As a mission driven health care provider, we fundamentally believe everyone should be able to get affordable, high quality sexual and reproductive health care in their communities, no matter where they live or how much money they make, and we advocate for policies that help make this vision a reality.

Following the Supreme Court's decision overturning *Roe* last June, Governor Mills issued Executive Order 4: *An Order Protecting Access to Reproductive Health Care Services in Maine*. This executive order aimed in part to identify ways to shield clinicians and organizations who provide the full spectrum of pregnancy care including abortion as well as protect patients from criminal prosecution due to bans on abortion in other states. LD 616 seeks to strengthen our state's commitment to abortion access by codifying in law protections for licensed clinicians providing abortion care to people traveling to Maine without threats to their ability to practice medicine.

The legislation seeks to mitigate the risk of out-of-state enforcement against clinicians in Maine who provide sexual and reproductive healthcare, including abortion, to patients from our state

and elsewhere. The bill prevents medical malpractice insurance providers from discriminating against abortion providers by denying providers coverage, discriminatorily increasing rates, or taking any other action against a provider based on their legal provision of abortion. This bill will help to ensure that abortion providers can get and maintain medical malpractice insurance, regardless of adverse enforcement from those in states hostile to abortion access.

LD 616 is an appropriate step to take to protect Maine's medical community as we have seen an increasing number of people traveling here to safely and legally access care. Even before *Dobbs* approximately 6.5% of the patients seeking abortion in Maine did not identify the state as their home. These numbers, which are reflective of the state's large seasonal population of students, workers and visitors, are expected to increase as more and more people lose their reproductive rights. Nineteen states have enacted bans on abortion, with 1 in 3 women living in a part of the country without access to legal abortion.

In the year since the US Supreme Court decision *Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health*, we are starting to get an understanding of just how far politicians hostile to abortion will go to prevent people from getting the care they need. The State of Idaho passed a law targeting medical professionals in other states including Maine if they legally provide abortion care to a minor. In Indiana, a physician was targeted by the Attorney General for legally providing abortion care to a minor who had traveled to the state from Ohio with a grandparent. In that case, the privacy and security of the physician was put at serious risk as elected officials released personal information about the clinician and patient. In Texas, politicians passed a law allowing private citizens to sue medical providers who help their patients access necessary abortion care. And last month, a group opposed to abortion filed suit in federal court to take away the FDA's approval of a safe medication, mifepristone, used for medication abortion. These are just a few examples of the tactics politicians are using to impact access to abortion across the country including here in Maine.

The *Dobbs* decision has created a stark landscape for people and their rights and freedoms, and the moment calls for action. While we cannot control the actions of other states, we can mitigate legal risk for people in Maine. We ask that you act to protect patients and providers in every way that you possibly can, and I urge the committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 616.