



Post Office Box 587  
Augusta, ME 04332-0587

t: 207.622.7524

f: 207.622.0836

Testimony in support:

**LD 227, "An Act Regarding Health Care in the State"**

Joint Standing Committee On Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

March 5, 2024

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Committee On Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, my name is Evelyn Kieltyka, live in East Winthrop. I am a family nurse practitioner and the Senior Vice President of Program Services at Maine Family Planning (MFP.) I am here to speak in support of LD 227, "An Act Regarding Health Care in the State" sponsored by Representative Anne Perry, and to ask for your support of the proposal.

MFP provides comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care to adults and teens at 18 health centers statewide. For more than 50 years, MFP has also served as the non-profit administrator of Maine's statewide family planning network, encompassing federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), school-based health centers, as well as four Planned Parenthood clinics in Southern Maine. Altogether, Maine's sexual and reproductive health care network consists of 61 individual sites, stretching from Calais, to Fort Kent and all the way down to Sanford.

MFP has been providing gender-affirming care for over 10 years to hundreds of patients across the state. This care is under attack in other states that has put providers at risk for vigilantism from licensing boards that would use interstate compacts to penalize clinicians or insurers would use to reject coverage—all the things that the shield bill protects against.

As providers of both gender-affirming and sexual and reproductive health care, Maine Family Planning strongly supports LD 227 because we know that the circumstances that surround the healthcare decisions made by our patients are unique and complicated. Unfortunately, some politicians in several U.S. states are engaging in alarming government overreach, banning access to essential medical care and criminalizing providers for practicing medicine in line with the standards of care. As someone who has spent time in this committee, I know you as lawmakers work tirelessly to ensure Mainers have more access to healthcare, not less and that is why I am asking you to support LD 227.

Again, healthcare decisions made by our patients are unique and complicated. Those decisions cannot be known by lawmakers here in Augusta and therefore decisions of those kinds should not be made by lawmakers in Augusta. People, not politicians, should have the freedom to make their own health decisions, including when it comes to their gender and reproductive care. The only way your

constituents will have their healthcare decisions protected is by ensuring we can practice medicine in line with standards of care.

Another issue Maine Family Planning cares very much about is the privacy of our providers and patients. The criminalization of medical practices necessitates the sharing of personal information because criminal cases can't be prosecuted or defended without details. Furthermore, Maine Family Planning believes our law enforcement agencies should be focused on protecting public safety – not spying on medical providers.

In closing, to ensure essential healthcare remains available to all who need it, Maine must take action to protect providers from hostile laws enacted in other states and secure access to reproductive and transgender healthcare. Please vote ought to pass on LD 227. Thank you.