

February 5th, 2025

Testimony in support of LD 163: An Act to Require Health Insurance Coverage for Federally Approved Nonprescription Oral Hormonal Contraceptives and Nonprescription Emergency Contraceptives

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and distinguished members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services committee.

My name is Eli Durand-McDonnell, I am from Bar Harbor, Maine and I am the Policy Coordinator at Maine Youth Power, a youth-led, youth movement throughout rural and suburban Maine fighting to win human dignity, equity and a livable future for all. I am here today to urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 163: An Act to Require Health Insurance Coverage for Federally Approved Nonprescription Oral Hormonal Contraceptives and Nonprescription Emergency Contraceptives.

I believe that now, perhaps more than ever, this particular bill is needed. As we've seen the cost of living rise all across the country and across Maine, lawmakers have the exciting opportunity to actually help lower the financial burden of essential care, and give Mainers even more choice when it comes to their reproductive health.

Young people in particular would feel the impact of this bill; they are both especially vulnerable to rising costs *and* may be navigating decisions around pregnancy, birth control, and reproductive health more frequently than other age demographics. As they sort through these decisions, young Mainers should feel like they have full access to all their options, especially when the stakes are potentially so high.

From an organizational standpoint, Maine Youth Power consistently hears from young people that accessible healthcare and the ability to freely make decisions about their health is paramount. This was reflected very clearly in a months-long issue survey where we heard from over 100 young people about what political issues matter the most to them. The category "Healthcare and Reproductive Rights" was quickly voted into the top three most important issue categories, and many respondents went out of their way to mention this topic in the additional comments section. I believe that we should listen to this sentiment and lower financial barriers to essential care.

Once again, I urge you to support LD 163.

Thank you for your consideration,
Eli Durand-McDonnell