



Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Lisa Margulies, I serve as Vice President of Public Affairs, Maine, for Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, and I am here today to submit testimony in support of LD 260.

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England provides comprehensive reproductive and sexual health care in approximately 10,000 visits per year in Maine at four health centers located in Biddeford, Portland, Sanford, and Topsham, as well as online via telehealth. People turn to us for affordable, high-quality care including wellness exams, birth control, disease testing and treatment, cancer screenings, gender-affirming care, abortion care, as well as a variety of primary care services.

As a mission driven health care provider, we fundamentally believe everyone should be able to access 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. All people deserve to access comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion and gender-affirming care, free from shame, stigma, and intimidation. We see everyone who comes to us regardless of ability to pay, and in a typical year, we provide more than \$1.2 million in free and discounted care to our communities in Maine. For many, we are their only access to the health care system.

There are broad benefits to enshrining the protections of the Maine Human Rights Act into the Maine Constitution, spanning the breadth of Mainer's everyday life. My testimony speaks to its impact on a narrow but extremely timely area: access to health care, specifically access to sexual and reproductive health care of one's choosing.

When the Supreme Court released its decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson*, overturning *Roe v. Wade*, it removed federal protections for abortion access and put hundreds of millions of Americans' abilities to access the health care of their choice at the whims of politicians in their respective states. Since that decision, abortion access in the United States has devolved into a chaotic and often confusing labyrinth, where one's ability to access health care is determined by their address and state legislature. While some states, like Maine, have taken steps to protect and expand access to abortion, 19 others have moved to restrict or even outright ban access to a safe, often medically necessary health care procedure. We are now facing a national health care crisis, with pregnant people dying due to restrictions on care.

A similar battle is being fought at the state and national level with regards to gender-affirming care. From 2023 to present, state and federal legislators have introduced nearly 375 pieces of



legislation to restrict or ban access to gender affirming care,<sup>1</sup> with age-restricted bans passing in more than half the country. Like abortion, gender-affirming care is essential, lifesaving medical care. Planned Parenthood of Northern New England is proud to provide gender-affirming care, and this care is central to our core mission and commitment around bodily autonomy, self-determination, and agency.

The right to make decisions about one's health, body, and future, including abortion and gender-affirming care, is central to equality. Laws and policies that intentionally prevent individuals from accessing sexual and reproductive health care are discriminatory, dangerous, and cruel.

LD 260 represents a crucial and timely opportunity to secure health care access for future generations by enshrining equal rights for all in the state constitution. Planned Parenthood of Northern New England stands with people who, because of systematic racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression, have been disenfranchised and denied access to justice and quality of life. True equality demands that every person have access to comprehensive health care, no matter their gender, race, ethnicity, income, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, immigration status, or any other identity. Access to reproductive health care is inherent to the dignity and humanity of all Mainers and should not be subject to shifting political winds. Legislatures and governors change—rights do not. It is for this and many other reasons that I am proud to support LD 260.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://translegislation.com/>