



March 10th, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services;

I join you today on behalf of the Maine Women's Lobby. For over forty 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 143, "An Act to Improve Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family Planning Services" and we thank Senator Pierce for sponsoring this important bill.

Maine's network of over 60 family planning clinics are essential to Maine's public health infrastructure, and their continued health ensures the continued health of Maine and Maine's women, especially those from our most vulnerable communities.

While the health-related benefits of having access to family planning services are clear, family planning also supports the overall economy and economic security. Delaying a birth can reduce the gap in pay between working mothers and their childless peers, and planned pregnancies can reduce women's chances of needing public assistance.¹ It is estimated that for every \$1 invested in family planning programs, federal and state governments save \$7.09 in part because of unintended pregnancies that were prevented.²

Access to family planning services, including birth control, also supports gender, racial, and geographic equity. More than half of people on birth control are on it for other health reasons in addition to birth control, such as treating or responding to cysts or endometriosis; women of color are particularly susceptible to ovarian cysts³ and are disproportionately affected by restrictions to birth control. Additionally, rural Mainers may turn to family planning clinics for the majority of their essential health care needs. **Because an effective family planning infrastructure is good for all of Maine, Maine must step up to ensure that access to these lifesaving services is assured.**

We hope you will vote 'ought to pass' on LD 143.

Thank you for your time, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Lily Bohan James, Advocacy Coordinator
Maine Women's Lobby

¹ Sonfield, et al. (2013). The social and economic benefits of women's ability to determine whether and when to have children. Retrieved from:

https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/social-economic-benefits.pdf

² Frost, Jennifer J., et al. (2014). "Return on investment: A fuller assessment of the benefits and cost savings of the US publicly funded family planning program." The Milbank Quarterly, 92(4), 667-720. [Online].

http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/MQ-Frost_1468-0009.12080.pdf

³ Marshall, LM. (2007). Variation in the incidence of uterine leiomyoma among premenopausal women by age and race. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9397113>