

LD 143: Funding Family Planning:

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, I am here before you today to plead for you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 143 and fund family planning care providers. My name is Cassandra Sparrold Shute and I am a mom, an educator, a costumer and a concerned constituent from Yarmouth.

Due to my medical history, I have a 33% success rate in maternity. It took 5 years, 3 OBs, a perinatologist, dedicated radiology tech and admitting privileges to 3 major hospitals in Tucson to have my daughter, successfully, without sepsis or a near-death experience.

It stands to reason that universal access to contraception, education and GOOD science is one of my main focuses for myself, my community, and most importantly, my kid.

Family planning facilities DO just this. In a world where so many are casually harmed, without any consideration for science and impact, I am here to call on OUR legislators to work to fulfill their oaths to protect people just like me. If I get pregnant in this current environment, I have a VERY tangible fear that I will not survive to experience my daughter's high school graduation. Her college celebration. Her marriage. Holding HER children. This abject terror of lackadaisical policy causes me frequent anxiety. Policies that denude organizations founded in science cause HARM, and not just to me. What about my daughter, who will need GOOD Sex ed? Men who need vasectomies? Screening for cervical cancer? HPV shots? What about YOUR kids? All your constituent's children?

Withholding funding from or continuing to flat fund these organizations is causing harm, as we speak. And to be quite frank, I will NOT allow someone in my home who does not aim to reduce harm being done. I choose to surround myself with folks who recognize science and evidence; I choose to work with folks who act kindly and consider how they impact others and mitigate and reduce harms.

I call on you to remember that this is OUR home, the home of our kids, and WE have a duty of care to our families - one that you took an oath to uphold, one your voters WILL hold you to, regularly, as we are duty-bound to do. In this environment of "alternative facts" we HAVE to make certain you prioritize OUR safety, based on good science and rational reasoning, not some fantastical rhetoric descending from some far-off place most people never see. I call on you to vote "ought" for LD 143, and keep Maine kind, supportive, decent, and aligned with GOOD research.