

March 10, 2025

To: Senator Ingwersen (32), Representative Meyer (150), and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Diane Oltarzewski, resident of Belfast

Regarding: LD 143 An Act to Improve Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family Planning Services - Ought to Pass

I thank you for this opportunity to share why I think this bill is so important and so timely.

It is often the young people in our state, navigating new relationships, encountering and trying to cope with sudden infections, for whom family planning clinics are a god-send. These people often don't have established family or primary care physicians to consult, and yet they find themselves needing professional consultation and treatment.

A healthcare clinic where they are welcomed, where they won't be turned away because of their financial circumstances, should be a cornerstone of every community. I was in my early 20s when I needed such care, and the local Planned Parenthood was such a blessing for me! I was suffering from an infection caused by an IUD in my uterus that my body would not accept...it was causing me chronic pain and discomfort, which frightened me. I knew I had to do something, and thankfully I found a wonderful doctor at the clinic who explained to me what was going on, removed the IUD, provided antibiotics, and counseled me about alternative methods of birth control. My fear turned into relief, and the experience gave me confidence to take responsibility for my healthcare going forward.

I want this positive experience available for every other young person in Maine, and if we endorse and fund this bill, we guarantee that will be the case. Please affirm our collective commitment to the education and well-being of our young people. Please give LD 143 your unanimous support.

Thank you for hearing me.