



Teresa S. Pierce
Senator, District 25
Senate Majority Leader

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

6 Waites Landing Road
Falmouth, ME 04105

***Testimony of Senate Majority Leader Teresa S. Pierce introducing
LD 143, An Act to Improve Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family
Planning Services
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
March 10, 2025***

Chair Ingwersen, Chair Meyer, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Teresa S. Pierce. I serve as the Senate Majority Leader, representing Senate District 25, which includes Falmouth, Cumberland, North Yarmouth, Yarmouth (majority), Gray, and Long Island. I am pleased to stand before you to introduce **LD 143, An Act to Improve Women's Health and Economic Security by Funding Family Planning Services.**

LD 143 is our opportunity — our obligation — to continue to defend and protect Mainer's access to this critical health care, and an opportunity to make sure we do not lose sight of the fact that it is our duty as lawmakers here in Augusta ensure everyone has access to the basic health care they need to thrive.

This bill allocates \$6.18 million in grant funding to the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that our state's family planning network can weather ongoing challenges that include increased costs of delivering care, increased patient demand and the instability at the federal level. I'm dedicated to advocating for our providers, their patients, and the funding they need to provide quality care across the state to our most vulnerable neighbors.

Maine Family Planning (MFP) is a statewide, private, not-for-profit organization founded more than 50 years ago to ensure access to the full range of family health services for Maine people regardless of their ability to pay. Their network serves more than 31,000 patients annually, 70% of whom qualified for free or reduced cost care in 2023.

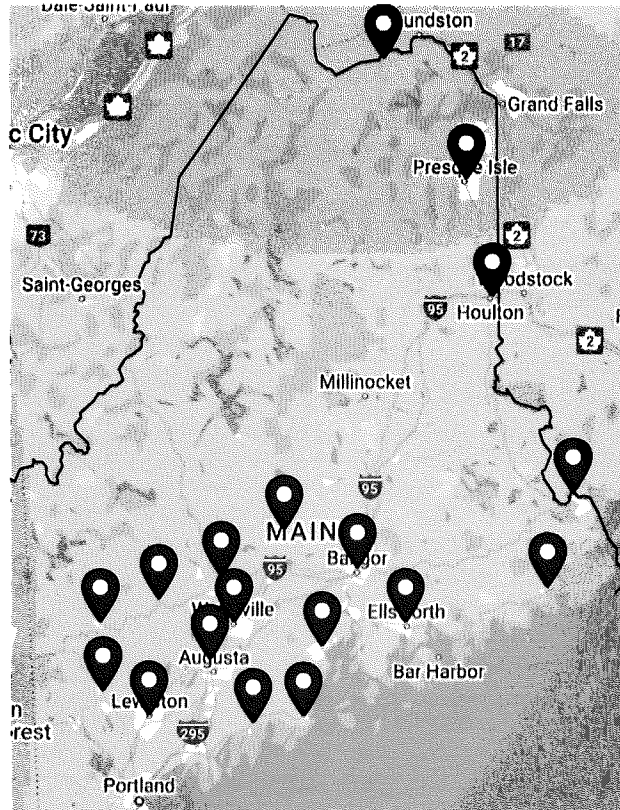
This mission of Maine Family Planning started with former State Representative Sherry Huber, a Republican from Falmouth. She and I became acquainted when I first ran for the House in 2014. When she passed, Maine lost an amazing public servant and I lost a friend and mentor. Huber was a staunch defender of Family Planning Services. She knew the importance of women's health and its direct connection to economic security. As you'll see in the map below, these centers are all north of Portland, all the way up to Fort Kent, and all the way Downeast.



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Source: mainefamilyplanning.org/patient-resources/find-a-clinic/

This critical safety net benefits the most vulnerable Mainers who turn to these providers for a broad range of care including birth control, cancer screenings, well person care, vaccinations, testing and treatment for STIs, and behavioral health services. To clear up any misconception, not a dime of appropriations from LD 143 will go towards abortion care. Funds will instead go to the previously mentioned annual, preventative health care services.

These services provided by MFP have been undervalued for decades, and providers are navigating the pressures facing all health care providers today. These pressures include increasing costs of delivering care, growing demand for free and reduced care, inflation, and insufficient and stagnant reimbursement rates.

With the uncertainty and chaos at the federal level, it is incumbent upon us as state legislators to secure access to essential health care services to keep our constituents and communities healthy for years to come.

I am grateful for the opportunity to present this bill and am happy to answer any questions you have.