

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, I'm Cassandra Shute, I live in Yarmouth, ME, and I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 335.

My name is Cassandra Sparrold Shute and I am a high-risk mommy, having lost twins at 20 weeks. As a result of my experiences, when I became a mom, I knew using my civics knowledge gained from becoming a Middle School Social Studies Educator was the most important thing I could do for my child. I've spoken before your committee, and I want to take a moment to express deep gratitude for the work you've done so far to safeguard bodily autonomy and health through science, dedication and consistent allyship. When you last voted to fund family planning services, I observed a commitment to Mainers through ensuring equitable access to science, health, education, and even immunizations, despite persistent and pervasive federal defunding attacks against family planning. By voting for ongoing funding, you demonstrate a clear understanding between the connections to our healthy families and communities.

This is why I stand before you again, pleading for family planning care funding. Our family planning centers are critical centers of education and health, granting not just cancer and STI screenings, but connecting folks with adjacent services, like mental health, immunizations, in addition to contraception and education. These services are foundational to the health of our communities, giving us agency and knowledge to understand our own bodies, and they are under federal defunding measures on a regular basis, causing massive funding gaps designed to weaken all these critical support systems. As a mother, a friend, a wife, I know that without access to these things, we cannot hope to thrive. I know you hope for all your neighbors and your children, and all the people in this state. The best way to demonstrate this hope is to vote "Ought" on LD 335.

Respectfully,
Cassandra Sparrold Shute
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Yarmouth, ME