

Good morning,
Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the
Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Sarah Waite, and I live
in Denmark, Maine. I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on
LD 335. I would like to share my story with you.

In my first semester of college, I was 17, naive, and "green." I grew up in
a household where the "unmentionables"—sex, birth control, and
reproductive health—were, in fact, never mentioned. I was a young girl
with a Dorothy Hamill haircut and pink and green whale pants, suddenly
dropped into the freedom of campus life in the middle of West Virginia.

With that freedom, I experimented, but I lacked the toolkit to navigate it. I
didn't know that resources like Planned Parenthood existed to help me
prevent a pregnancy. I only found out about the difficulties of navigating
the reproductive health care system when I found myself staring at a
positive test.

I had just turned 18. I was petrified and deeply ashamed.

Planned Parenthood was the first place that replaced my fear with
information. They didn't just provide a medical service; they provided an
education. They ensured I was supported, offered me counseling, and,
perhaps most importantly—reminded me that I was not alone.

I often think about what would have happened to that 18-year-old girl if
Planned Parenthood hadn't been there. I am incredibly fortunate that I
never had to find out. Every woman, girl, and mother deserves that same
chance. They deserve the chance to have a choice, the access to birth
control, and the right to health care that fits their life and their needs.

I am sharing my story because silence is what led me to my experience.
I believe that speaking out is what will protect the choices of those who
come after me.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 335. Thank you.