

Good morning Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Betsy Williams, I live in Brunswick, and I am a co-chairperson of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Action Network, linking over 400 individuals and 18 congregations in working for public policies that center our core religious values and principles.

Last year I testified before this committee on funding Family Planning Services, and I am grateful for the vote you took and the outcome of that bill. Sadly, the funding secured is insufficient in the face of federal actions and I am returning to this committee today to make the same argument for LD 335.

And here it is: Not *all* people of faith are opposed to protecting reproductive rights. In fact, *most* people of faith—in both Western and Eastern religions—follow a fundamental “commandment” (if you will) to love one’s neighbor as oneself. In practice, this means standing up and speaking up when the basic rights and protections of our most vulnerable citizens are threatened.

LD 335 addresses such a threat by prioritizing the funding necessary to provide essential health services to women who are otherwise unable to access them. Without preventative annual exams and screenings, women are vulnerable to a host of treatable illnesses including cervical cancer, HIV and STIs. Without family planning services, men, women and children are *all* vulnerable to greater economic hardship due to untreated illness and unplanned pregnancies.

Every woman in Maine deserves to be given the opportunity for a healthy life. Every woman in Maine deserves to be treated with the same respect you would treat the women in your own life. “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Please do not abandon Maine’s most vulnerable families. Vote yes on LD 335 and use the power that only you our state legislators have, to assure that funding these services will continue. Thank you.