



Greetings State of Maine Health Coverage, insurance, and Financial Services Committee,

Support 922: **An Act To Help Cancer Patients with Fertility Preservation**

Thank you for taking the time to hear this piece of legislation. I asked Representative Margaret Craven to introduce the legislation to have insurance cover the cost of fertility preservation.

My name is Rico Dence, Founder and CEO of Team Up Cancer. I am a young adult cancer survivor and speaking on behalf of other young adult cancer survivors.

Chemotherapy can kill the ovaries. Not all chemotherapy will affect a person's fertility, some of them will. Ten other states have passed this needed legislation.

In Maine, currently insurance doesn't cover the procedure to freeze the eggs or sperm. Insurance does cover the cost of fertility issues once a person has fertility issues. After chemotherapy has damaged a young adult cancer survivor's reproductive organ, they are now eligible for fertility treatment. Sadly it is often too late.

The procedure to freeze eggs could cost up to 10,000 dollars, yet for a college student they don't have the cash to cover the cost of the procedure. Often their parents are helping to cover the cost of college. The college student is concerned about dying and does not want to delay treatment to try to find funds. They are forced to start cancer treatment, but often don't realize the life long emotional effects on not having a child.

I have attended many young adult cancer events across the country, and have heard stories of countless women talking about not having the funds to freeze their eggs prior to treatment. They choose to do cancer treatment and they are not cancer free.

Every time a woman talks about not being able to freeze their eggs. They break out the tears and do their best to hold it in.

Being told you have cancer is a kick in the gut. Then being told you have only a couple weeks to freeze your eggs or sperm, or you could never have kids is another emotional blow. Everyone wants to live, so they are forced to make decisions that they are not ready for the lifelong emotional impact.

Here is a short story about Jenny:

Jenny is in college and is told she has cancer. She is in shock and fearful of dying. She is then told that you need to freeze eggs so she can have kids in the future.



Wait what? I cannot think about that now. I need to live. She can't afford the treatment of freezing eggs. She received treatment and now she is cancer free.

Jenny is now 25 years old. She has been dating for a while and wants to get married. Her boyfriend could not get over the fact she can't have kids. He wants kids, so they break up.

Jenny is now 30. She has a new boyfriend and gets married to Michael. Jenny goes to her sister's baby shower. Someone ask Jenny when are you going to have children. Jenny informs the person she can't.

Jenny's sister has a baby named Sara, and years later Jenny is at Sara's birthday party. Someone asked Jenny do you have kids?" She tells them she can't have kids.

Jenny is now 35, and she is at work. Her coworkers ask Jenn do you have children?" She says no.

Jenny is now 38, her coworkers ask her when she is going to have kids. She finally tells them she cannot have kids; she could not afford the treatment to freeze her eggs while dealing with cancer.

Later people ask her when she is going to have kids. She has to explain to new people in their life she can't have a child because one procedure she could not afford. She had to choose to treat her cancer.

Jenny's siblings have more kids. Jenny and her hubby never throw a birthday party for their kids because Jenny could not have any.

Jenny is 45', her niece is graduating high school. Jenny never gets to see her child graduate or attend the first day of school.

Jenny is now 50, her niece Sara gets married and has a child. Jenny never became a grandmother.

Jenny's husband dies, and Jenny has no child or grandchildren to visit.

This small procedure to freeze Jenny's egg is a lifelong reminder. Jenny is constantly reminded throughout her lifetime about not having a child. She never gets to see the joy of a child become an adult.

It was not just Jenny who lost. Her mother lost; her siblings lost out in a joy of a child. They also sympathize with Jenny's pain, but never quite understand the long term suffering Jenny deals with. It is the lonely silence.

Passing this legislation would help many Jenny's to have kids. It would help bring happiness to Jenny, and many more people.



Hope you all vote yes and help bring life into our wonderful world.

Sincerely,

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