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**Testimony by Senator Mattie Daughtry**

**Senate District #24**

***Including Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, North Yarmouth and Pownal***

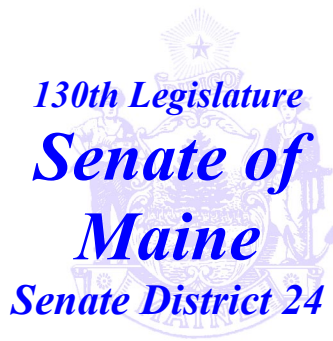
***In support of LD 1954***

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, I am Senator Mattie Daughtry. I represent Senate District 24, which includes the towns of Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, North Yarmouth and Pownal. I'm here today to support LD 1954, "An Act To Ensure Access to Prescription Contraceptives."

Contraceptives are a safe, convenient and straightforward way to prevent pregnancy. In addition to preventing pregnancy, contraceptives can be used to control menstrual cycles and side effects of your period, such as cramps, acne, and mood swings. Contraceptives such as birth control can also prevent or less your odds for an ectopic pregnancy, bone thinning, cysts in your breasts and ovaries, iron deficiency, endometrial and ovarian cancers and overall infections in your ovaries, fallopian tubes and uterus.

In the United States, you need a prescription to take birth control. Prices for your contraceptive and the appointment with a doctor or a nurse to receive the prescription varies depending on your insurance plan. For example, copays for a month of birth control pills can range from \$0 to \$50 per package, and the initial visit to arrange for a birth control prescription can range from \$35 to \$250. While most insurances cover doctor's visits related to birth control, some may not cover each method equally, and copays can make birth control less affordable and accessible for some people. Arranging to pick up your birth control pills with a copay versus picking up groceries or filling up your gas tank can be a hard decision that no one should have to make.

Deciding when or when not to get pregnant gives women a greater degree of choice and freedom. It advances women's economic empowerment and improves outcomes for mothers and their children overall. The benefits of affordable family planning emphasize the importance of ensuring that Americans have access to cheap, reliable birth control methods. A 2010 study found that publicly funded contraceptive care resulted in a reduction of nearly [one million unplanned births](#). Controlling the timing of childbearing gives women more options for higher education and has been directly linked to higher lifetime earnings for women and their children. Removing barriers to contraceptives helps alleviate the costs borne almost entirely by women



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and saves taxpayer dollars. After the ACA went into effect in 2012, women saved [\\$483 million](#) on birth control pills. Preventing unplanned pregnancy also saves the [U.S. government billions](#) between Medicaid-covered maternity and infant care, medical care for young children, Medicaid-covered miscarriages and abortion care. Ensuring that women have access to contraceptives helps uplift women and saves the government money. It's that simple.

Ensuring that health insurance policies cover all contraceptive drugs, devices and products approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration without any deductible, coinsurance, copayment or cost-sharing requirement is an essential step to helping women live healthier lives and helping women achieve economic security.