



Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Lisa Margulies, I serve as the Maine Vice President of Public Affairs at Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, and I am pleased to submit testimony in support of LD 1139.

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England provides comprehensive reproductive and sexual health care in approximately 10,000 visits per year in Maine at four health centers located in Biddeford, Portland, Sanford, and Topsham, as well as online via telehealth. People turn to us for affordable, high-quality care including wellness exams, birth control, disease testing and treatment, cancer screenings, abortion care, gender-affirming care, as well as a variety of primary care services.

As a mission driven health care provider, we fundamentally believe everyone should be able to access affordable, high quality sexual and reproductive health care in their communities, no matter where they live or how much money they make, and we advocate for policies that help make this vision a reality. All people deserve to access comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion and gender affirming care, free from shame, stigma, and intimidation. We see everyone who comes to us regardless of ability to pay, and in a typical year, we provide more than \$1.2 million in free and discounted care to our communities in Maine. For many, we are their only access to the health care system.

A report from the Guttmacher Institute indicates that women are at greatest risk of violence by intimate partners during their reproductive years.<sup>i</sup> As a reproductive health care provider, we recognize how critical the services provided by VOCA are for our patients. These services operate in tandem with the health care we provide and are essential to ensuring our patients' mental and physical wellbeing. Any cuts to VOCA funding would most severely impact marginalized and underserved communities we are committed to serving who need and deserve access to the array of resources VOCA funds.

While the full impact of the pending VOCA shortfall is hard to capture, we can quantify what full funding achieved past years: in 2022, VOCA funds supported almost 50,000 distinct services for over 12,000 Maine people. If the current shortfall is not addressed, VOCA grantees would be forced to make catastrophic cuts to service, including potentially reducing the current 24/7 availability of the Statewide Domestic Violence helpline, closing domestic violence and trafficking safe houses, and eliminating victim witness advocate programs.

We urge you to act to cover the imminent VOCA funding gap and ensure that we meet our obligations to victims of crime in their time of need. We urge the members of this committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1139 and enable victims to receive the services they deserve, obtain justice, and recover from violence and trauma.

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<sup>i</sup> Moore, Melissa, Reproductive Health and Intimate Partner Violence, November 1, 1999,  
<https://www.guttmacher.org/journals/psrh/1999/11/reproductive-health-and-intimate-partner-violence>