

**Testimony of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
Finance Committee, Connecticut General Assembly, April 23, 2015
Susan Lloyd Yolen, Vice President, Public Policy & Advocacy**

Thank you for the opportunity to express Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE)'s support for a range of revenue approaches to the budget in order to avoid the draconian cuts anticipated in the Governor's budget.

As the state's largest provider of family planning and reproductive health services, PPSNE serves over 65,000 women and men annually at 17 health centers across the state. Like many other nonprofits that contract with the state and the Connecticut Medicaid program to deliver important health services on the State's behalf, our organization would be very negatively impacted by the proposed budget. More importantly, our patients living in your communities could be impacted with fewer accessible family planning services, fewer hours of operation and perhaps even fewer access points.

Publicly funded family planning services save money by preventing unintended Medicaid pregnancies. In 2010 (last year for complete data available), publicly funded family planning services helped Connecticut women avoid 18,500 unintended pregnancies **saving the state an estimated \$133 million.**¹ Cutting family planning reimbursement rates now means we will pay for our shortsightedness with higher Medicaid costs. We would also forfeit the \$9 to \$1 federal match available for Medicaid family planning services.

As a long time organizational member of Better Choices for Connecticut, PPSNE urges the General Assembly to seriously consider *generating the revenue necessary* to preserve the human services our state's families need and deserve.

We agree with our colleagues at CT Voices for Children that there are better alternatives to budget cuts, and believe that any of the sensible proposals that they have forwarded to this committee could raise significant revenue and insure that desperately important services are preserved. We hope that you will look at these suggestions carefully, and restore the \$590 million in funding that proposed to be cut from every state agency budget, impacting every health and human services provider and every school system in the state.

Connecticut is a wealthy state, and many of us who work and advocate here at the Capitol are blessed and privileged *because we live here*. We can, however, and simply *must* do better for the women, men and children of Connecticut than the proposal that is before you. Please keep our most vulnerable citizens in mind as you deliberate, and consider a range of sensible revenue recommendations, knowing that there are many of us behind you, as you prepare your response .

Thank you.

¹ Sonfield A, Hasstedt K and Gold RB, "Moving Forward: Family Planning in the Era of Health Reform," New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2014