

Human Services Committee
Public Testimony of the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)
*S.B. 274: An Act Concerning Increased Funding to Planned Parenthood and
Other Family Planning Clinics*
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The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) is a statewide, nonprofit organization that advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved or marginalized. For forty-six years, CWEALF has been a leading advocate of policy solutions that enhance women's economic security, combat discrimination, and increase access to reproductive healthcare.

CWEALF is also an active member of the Coalition for Choice, a group led by Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) that promotes policies that improve women's access to reproductive healthcare and protects a woman's right to bodily autonomy.

CWEALF urges the Committee to support *S.B. 274: An Act Concerning Increased Funding to Planned Parenthood and Other Family Planning Clinics*, which will provide critical funding for continued access to preventive reproductive health care for the people of Connecticut who already struggle to receive the care they need.

In August 2019, Planned Parenthood affiliates across the United States, including PPSNE, were forced out of the federal Title X Family Planning program, the only federal program dedicated solely to supporting the delivery of family planning and related preventive healthcare services. Without the Title X program, patients across Connecticut will lose access to free or low-cost basic care, including birth control, STI/STD testing, and cancer screenings.

The economic security of women and their families is directly impacted by women's access to affordable, accessible, and quality health care. Research shows that the ability to decide when and whether to become a parent due to access to reproductive health care and birth control increases women's participation in the workforce and lifetime earnings; however, these services are often unaffordable.

The Title X program combats inequity in the health care system by serving populations that historically face barriers to care, including people of color, as well as people who are low-income, LGBTQ+, immigrants, or live in rural areas. In Connecticut, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England is critical to providing family planning care and health care services.

In 2018, PPSNE serviced 41,096 Title X at 11 health centers, which accounted for 88% of those served by Title X in our state. Fifty-four percent (54%) of patients identify as people of color.

Title X provides affordable birth control and reproductive health care to people who are low income and otherwise could not afford access to these services on their own. In 2016, an estimated 180,670 women in Connecticut needed publicly supported contraceptive services and supplies. Connecticut women who obtained publicly supported contraceptives and supplies from Title X providers were able to postpone or avoid 7,420 unintended pregnancies and 2,510 abortions.¹

All people deserve access to comprehensive health care. In a national climate that is persistent in its threats to dismantle basic human rights, Connecticut must continue to protect access to sexual and reproductive health care services, especially for our state's most vulnerable residents. We urge the Committee and General Assembly to pass S.B. 274 to support funding for family planning providers, including Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, and protect access to sexual and reproductive health care.

¹<https://data.guttmacher.org/states/table?state=CT&topics=92+93+94+96+97+98+114+113&dataset=data>