

Dear Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Yenimar Cortes. I am from New Haven. I am an intern with Planned Parenthood and a member of the immigrant rights organization, Connecticut Students for a Dream.

I am testifying in support of raised 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 sexual and reproductive health care for the people of Connecticut who already struggle to get the care they need.

Last year, I went to Planned Parenthood as a patient and visited a gynecologist for the first time in my life. I remember being so nervous about my health issue that I was going in for, and also about the type of care I would need to get. Fortunately, my experience at Planned Parenthood was so amazing, and the health care providers made me feel so comfortable and safe. When it was time to pay, I told the clinician assistant that I was uninsured. They didn't make me feel ashamed or bad about it- instead they told me they would do the best they could to help lower the cost. As an undocumented, low- income immigrant, Planned Parenthood has been one of the few providers that has been a reliable point of care due to their sliding scale that is possible because of Title X funds.

All people need and deserve equal access to comprehensive health care, including sexual and reproductive health care, because healthcare is a human right. Planned Parenthood plays an indispensable role in providing family planning care in Connecticut. In 2018, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England over 41,000 Title X patients at 11 health centers in Connecticut, accounting for 88% of those served by Title X in the state.

Thank you to Governor Lamont and elected leaders for supporting family planning funding in the budget and continuing our state's strong commitment to protecting and improving women's health care. I strongly support raised S.B. 274 and urge the committee and legislature to vote favorably to support funding for family planning providers, including Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, and protect access to sexual and reproductive health care for those most in need in our state.

Thank you for your time,
Yenimar Cortes
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