

Susan DeSilver
1647 Middletown Avenue
Northford, Connecticut 06472
(203) 484-4738

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

I am Susan DeSilver of Northford, Connecticut and 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 reproductive health care for the people of Connecticut who already struggle to get the care they need.

Federal Title X funding now prohibits providers from discussing all options legally available to patients for their health care. Therefore, it is imperative that we make sure Planned Parenthood and other women's health clinics are able to continue their mission of providing reproductive health care, cancer screenings, contraception, STD screenings, and other health services, unhindered by the gag rule which prevents providers from discussing or referring for abortion services.

Without Title X funding, State funding will be a vital asset to insure that underserved populations of lower income women have the ability to manage their health. This is a wise investment because according to countless studies, the ability to control reproduction is an important predictor of economic wellbeing.

Without the health care provided by Planned Parenthood, a single parent might be consigned to have a child she can't afford to be raised in a society which values life before it is born and discards it without support after it's already here. Planned Parenthood clinics serve over 40% of women without health coverage or who work for employers who have opted out of covering reproductive services.

Furthermore, access to complete reproductive information, health screenings, and contraception has reduced teen pregnancy, unplanned, and unaffordable pregnancies to the lowest level in history, thus reducing the need for abortion. For this, we have Planned Parenthood to thank.

I want to thank Governor Lamont and the legislators who support family planning in the State 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 and consideration,

Susan DeSilver