



**Testimony for Public Hearing
Human Services Committee
March 5, 2020**

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**S.B. 274 AN ACT CONCERNING INCREASED FUNDING TO PLANNED PARENTHOOD AND
OTHER FAMILY PLANNING CLINICS**

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and honorable members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Liz Gustafson and I am the State Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut. I testify in strong support of 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 preventative health care for the people of Connecticut who already struggle to get the care they need.

Planned Parenthood is frequently the sole option for individuals who are uninsured or those who are low income, and we must ensure the 41,000 people who utilize Title X funding in the State of Connecticut can continue to access a full range of reproductive health care. When I was an AmeriCorps VISTA facing significant financial barriers of my own, I began experiencing extreme pain and symptoms that impacted my personal life, employment and relationships. Planned Parenthood not only provided me with immediate care to address my symptoms, but also diagnosed me with Endometriosis, Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder and worked together with my mental health care provider to create a care plan that has allowed to me live and maintain a happy and healthy life.

Title X is the only federal program dedicated to providing family planning services for low-income patients and has received bipartisan support for decades. This program plays an irreplaceable role in providing a full range of preventative, necessary reproductive health care, and this unethical and harmful attack executed by the Trump- essentially forces health care providers to lie and mislead patients about their care, and forces facilities that offer abortions to institute exceptionally cost-prohibitive “physical separation” requirements.

This is not only an issue of reproductive freedom, but an economic, racial, immigrant, and LGBTQ+ rights and justice issue. Make no mistake, this change in Title X funding illustrates a strategy to increase barriers to essential reproductive health care such as wellness exams, birth control, STI/STD testing and treatment, and cancer screenings. In 2018, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England provided care to 88% of those served by Title X at 11 health centers, which highlights the significant role they play in ensuring access to affordable health care services. Additionally, this rule not only impacts Planned Parenthood, but

any health care provider that participates in the Title X program- from community health centers like Fair Haven Community Health Center to hospitals in the State of Connecticut.

Although PPSNE intends to keep each center open and will not make significant changes to their sliding fee scale, it is clear that Title X funds will need to be replaced to ensure the same level of care for those that are uninsured or covered by Medicaid. It is no secret that across the country health disparities are disproportionately experienced by populations who have historically faced significant barriers when accessing care, and Title X funding provided substantial support to fight these inequities. As someone who knows firsthand how committed Planned Parenthood is to providing their patients with preventative, lifesaving and compassionate care, we must take action to ensure they can continue to do so for the thousands of patients in our State. Health care is a human right and providing funding to family planning services will confirm the state's commitment to the reproductive health care needs of its' residents

NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut strongly supports 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 very much,

Liz Gustafson, NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut

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