

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

SB 274 An Act Concerning Increased Funding to Planned Parenthood and Other Family Planning Clinics

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee, my name is Michelle Harter, and I live in West End Hartford. I am a college student at University of Hartford transferred from Florida, having lived here and gained a sense of community for almost 4 years now.

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.

This issue is so very important to me due to the main factor of the community these wonderful programs offer. Being in a situation where you make a large life move and are alone for the time being, having something monumental happen can be devastating when you're alone. Not only being alone having a large impact, but the lack of funds and knowledge on how to deal with things on your own for the first time. I think it's important to hold yourself accountable for sexual acts and being proactive on checkups and safe sex, it's the first step. Telling the youth that sex happens after marriage and you should be prepared for it when you're at a financially stable place is almost as ridiculous as COMBINING church and state. This is a common topic, that affects almost every single person in this state, Nation, and world. It's a human right.

Title X is the only federal program dedicated to affordable family planning and preventive health care. Not everyone has a perfect family life at home. Not everyone has health insurance until they're 26. The lack of insurance was one of my first battles I had to deal with once I moved literally across the country. My mother and father became too sick to be able to handle finances so I was kicked off the family healthcare. Having the resources of Planned Parent Hood (PPH) at my fingertips was a godsend. Whether I had health insurance or not I was able to continue my birth control, I was able to continue regular check ups- all at affordable prices.

Without the Title X program, many patients will lose access to free or low-cost basic care like STI/STD testing. I recently was hospitalized for a rash that started on my ankle, that spread all over my legs. The doctors in the ER gave me antibiotics and basically couldn't figure out what it was. They suggested I test for gonorrhea because the spots on my legs had slight indication it could be that. Which the test also checked for chlamydia as well. Thankfully I didn't have gonorrhea, but I did have chlamydia. Every visit to the hospital was judgmental and stressing. So I went to PPH. I didn't have an appointment, I was in and out on a Saturday in under an hour, with the medication in hand to deal with my STD. The informed me my partner didn't have to get checked and I could get the partner pill for them- easy peasy. The best part was, the staff and doctors welcomed me with open arms, jokes, just an extremely caring environment. Coming from a lonely place in a new state, that was such a heavy weight lifted off my shoulders.

Thank you so much for your time,

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