

March 4, 2020

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

My name is Megan Haugland and I am a medical student living in North Haven, CT. I am testifying in strong support of raised S.B. 274 *An Act Concerning Funding For Planned Parenthood and Other Family Planning Clinics* which will provide funding to allow the people of Connecticut to have continued access to preventative reproductive health care services.

I strongly believe that all patients should have access to preventative health care regardless of their ability to pay. Patients' financial status unfortunately impacts their ability to access and afford health care. I have volunteered in free health clinics where I saw firsthand the devastating effects of diseases when they went untreated or undiagnosed. I remember observing a physician counsel a patient on her cervical cancer first detected from an abnormal Pap smear. She had not had screening in many years because of lack of access, and I often wonder how her life may have been different had she had access to low-cost preventative care, such as that offered at Planned Parenthood.

S.B. 274 is critical for Planned Parenthood and other family planning clinics to continue offering these preventative reproductive health care services. Planned Parenthood treats patients with a variety of health concerns, including pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, urinary tract infections, and breast, ovarian, and testicular cancers. Patients also have access to contraception and abortion, and receive education regarding sexual intercourse. The breadth of services provided by Planned Parenthood is essential to the health of Connecticut residents and truly helps to reduce the number of people who go without health care due to financial reasons.

It is crucial that this bill be passed now because Planned Parenthood and other family planning clinics were recently forced out of the Title X funding program. The decision to decline Title X funding was made because the newly enacted "Gag Rule" prohibits providers from telling patients how and where to access abortion. This forces providers to lie and mislead their patients regarding their health care options. As a future physician, I know this is unethical because it prevents providers from educating patients regarding all of their health care options.

I thank you very much for considering this bill because it shows our state's commitment to protecting and improving reproductive health care. I strongly support raised S.B. 274 and urge you to vote in favor of supporting this critical funding for Planned Parenthood and other family planning clinics so that we can continue to provide Connecticut residents with the reproductive health care they deserve.

Thank you for your time,

Megan Haugland
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