



Testimony on SB 274, An Act Concerning Funding for Planned Parenthood and other family planning clinics

Human Services Committee

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Senator Moore, Senator Logan, Representative Abercrombie, Representative Case, members of the Human Services Committee.

My name is Dr. Suzanne Lagarde and I am the CEO of Fair Haven Community Health Care in New Haven. I am here to speak in favor of SB 274 which provides for funding for health facilities which have lost Title X funding.

Nearly 50 years ago, Fair Haven Community Health Clinic was founded as a Family Planning Clinic. For these past 50 years, we have never wavered from our original mission to serve women and men who want to responsibly manage their reproductive health. For literally decades we enjoyed a wonderful partnership with Planned Parenthood of Southern New England. Planned Parenthood received funds directly through the Title X program and we were a subgrantee of Planned Parenthood, receiving on average close to \$200,000 yearly to provide care to our patients.

Then 2017 arrived and a new administration assumed power in Washington DC. In addition to threats of defunding Planned Parenthood, the current administration drastically cut funding overall, effective the spring of 2018. We saw our funding go from roughly \$200,000 annually to \$75,000 annually. Despite this significant cut in funding, we managed to continue to provide the same level of family planning services which includes providing FREE contraceptives to all of

our uninsured patients. In 2019 alone, we provided free of charge, both oral and injectable contraceptives as well as IUDs, to nearly 4000 patients.

But things got even worse. The current administration then instituted the so-called “Gag Rule”. This rule which went into effect in the spring of 2018, prevents doctors and nurses from talking about abortions. Our providers were now legally prevented from discussing abortion as one of several options available to women who might be struggling with the news of an unwanted pregnancy. This was a game changer. We felt that this intrusion into the doctor patient relationship was unacceptable and was detrimental to patient care. So, in the summer of 2019, we gave up our Title X funding.

Currently we have no funding to support our Family Planning efforts and so far, we have not cut back on services. We will not be able to sustain this financial burden indefinitely. We are most appreciative of the funding provided through SB 274. However, I need to emphasize that the funding we received in the last year, ~\$75,000, was a significant reduction from the roughly \$200,000 that we received annually for decades and the amount that is needed to provide comprehensive family planning services to all of our thousands of patients of child bearing age.

In closing, I am asking that

- 1) SB 274 be adopted, and that
- 2) the amount of the funding reflects the amount that centers like ours was receiving prior to the current administration in Washington DC, not the severely reduced amount that we received in 2018. For Fair Haven Community Health Care, that amount is roughly \$200,000 annually.

Gratefully submitted

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