

March 4, 2020

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

My name is Nancy L Livensparrger. I am from Portland, CT. I am a Farmer, Herbalist, Teacher and Aromatherapist.

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 is important to me because I come in contact with all ages, ethnic groups, socio-economic and gender different people in my work. Being a Senior citizen with children and grand children I see how this Act impacts everyone. I feel all people need and deserve equal access to comprehensive health care, including sexual and reproductive health care, because health care is a human right. Without the Title X program, many patients will lose access to free or low-cost basic care like birth control, STI/STD testing, and cancer screenings. Title X is the only federal program dedicated to affordable family planning and preventive health care including wellness exams, cervical and breast cancer screenings, birth control, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases and HIV.

The Title X program has received bipartisan support from Congress since its inception until now. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England had been in the Title X program since it was created nearly 50 years ago until being forced out in August of last year.

Planned Parenthood plays an indispensable role in providing family planning care in Connecticut. In 2018, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England over 41,000 Title X patients at 11 health centers in Connecticut, accounting for 88% of those served by Title X in the state.

- 54% of patients identify as people of color – 23% are Black or African-American and 23% are Latino/a/x

The Title X program fights health care inequity by serving populations that have historically faced significant barriers to care, including people of color, people of low income, LGBTQ+ people, immigrants and people living in rural areas

The Trump-Pence Administration implemented a new set of rules, known as the domestic “Gag Rule” on Title X providers that would have prohibited PPSNE from providing high quality, medically accurate care to patients. The “Gag Rule” prohibits anyone receiving Title X funds from telling patients how and where to access abortion; essentially, it forces health care providers to lie and mislead patients about their care. This harmful, medically unethical practice eliminates the guarantee that pregnant patients receive factual and nondirective counseling on all their legal health care options.

Thank you to Governor Lamont and elected leaders for supporting family planning funding in the 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,

Nancy L. Livensparger
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