

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

My name is Christine Mayotte, and I am a senior at the University of Connecticut studying Human Development and Family Sciences. I am the UConn Assistant Supervisor Intern for Planned Parenthood Votes! Connecticut. 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.

As humans, the one thing we have at the end of the day is our health. Planned Parenthood has taught me to value, cherish, and fight for my health. Last year, I saw ads for breast cancer awareness month on my social media. I stumbled upon Planned Parenthood's website on everything to know about breast cancer and how to properly administer a breast self-examination. To my surprise I felt a mass in my left breast, that I later had to have surgically removed. Without access to Planned Parenthood's reproductive health resources, I would have never known the important information about breast health that ultimately changed my life.

I think of women who do not have access to that information or services. People need Planned Parenthood, because healthcare is a right. Each person in this country deserves the right to the best healthcare possible. Without the Title X funding, patients will lose this access to birth control, STD screenings, testings, treatments, etc. The list is endless. Planned Parenthood provides everything it has to better the lives of their patients.

I remember the fear that came when our Title X funding was cut this past August. It was a month into my internship and I realized I was going to learn a lot more about the inequity of the healthcare system than I had anticipated. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England has been in the Title X program since it started about 50 years ago. When the "Gag rule" was implemented by the Trump-Pence Administration, we did not back down because our patients deserved to hear the correct information and to not be misled. The "Gag rule" is extremely unethical as it does not provide pregnant patients with the proper counseling on all their legal health care options. All patients deserve to receive the best healthcare possible with an increase of funding Planned Parenthood and other clinics will be able to do just that.

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,

Christine Mayotte
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