



Legislative Testimony
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**Written Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 274,
An Act Concerning Funding for Planned Parenthood
and Other Family Planning Clinics**

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, Ranking Members Logan and Case, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Kelly McConney Moore, and I am policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 274, An Act Concerning Funding for Planned Parenthood and Other Family Planning Clinics. We strongly encourage the Committee to support this bill to continue to allow access to high-quality, affordable healthcare for tens of thousands of people in Connecticut.

The ACLU-CT believes that family planning and abortion access are healthcare rights belonging to everyone in Connecticut. Funding to ensure that access to these healthcare services are available to every person, regardless of their income or ability to pay, is an important corollary to this right, not to mention an expenditure that enriches our society. When people have full autonomy over when and how to start families, our state is more secure, stable, and free.

Title X is a federal program devoted to providing exactly this type of affordable family planning and other healthcare.¹ It was established nearly fifty years ago.² In 2018, over 45,000 Connecticut residents were served by Title X healthcare.³ The Planned Parenthood affiliate operating in Connecticut, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, accounted for 88% percent of patients served by Title X in the state.⁴

¹ See "Funding History." Health and Human Services, available at <https://www.hhs.gov/opa/title-x-family-planning/about-title-x-grants/funding-history/index.html>.

² *Id.*

³ See "Connecticut Joins 21 States in Challenging New Title X Restrictions on Women's Reproductive Health Care." Office of the Attorney General (Mar. 5, 2019), available at <https://portal.ct.gov/AG/Press-Releases/2019-Press-Releases/CONNECTICUT-JOINS-21-STATES-CHALLENGING-NEW-TITLE-X-RESTRICTIONS-ON-REPRODUCTIVE-HEALTH-CARE>.

⁴ See Testimony of Gretchen Raffa, MSW on H.B. 5005, An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021 (Feb. 21, 2020), available at <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2020/APPdata/Tmy/2020HB-05005-R000221-DPH-Reproductive%20Services-Planned%20Parenthood-Raffa.%20Gretchen-TMY.PDF>.

In 2019, the federal government implemented new rules for Title X healthcare providers that prohibited any healthcare operator from telling patients how to access abortion.⁵ This, incidentally, is an unconstitutional restriction on healthcare workers' speech and infringes on people's rights to obtain healthcare. The ACLU has challenged this gag rule federally.⁶ The federal government's decision forced family planning clinics into an impossible choice: put their continued financial viability at serious risk by providing ethical care with integrity to patients; or put patients at risk by holding out critical healthcare information. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England chose to prioritize patient care, and as a result was forcibly removed from the Title X program in August 2019.⁷

The new Title X regulations have reduced access to safe, affordable abortions and other healthcare in parts of the country. If Connecticut fails to provide funding to Planned Parenthood and other affected providers, Connecticut residents could lose access to important medical treatments. Vulnerable communities would be most harmed: people between jobs, people coping with homelessness, people recently released from prison, and people of color. It is unacceptable to deny these communities access to healthcare and to forcibly intervene in their decisions about family planning.

Healthcare is a human right that the federal government has jeopardized for many Connecticut residents. Senate Bill 274 secures the right to healthcare, and to each person's right to make their own decisions about healthcare, by replacing funding to Planned Parenthood and other family planning clinics. This bill will allow everyone – regardless of income, race, gender, ability to pay, and circumstance – to access the high-quality, affordable care provided by Planned Parenthood and others. We fully support Senate Bill 274 and unreservedly urge the Committee to support it, too.

⁵ Title X Notice of Final Rule, Health and Human Services (Mar. 4, 2019), available at <https://www.hhs.gov/opa/title-x-family-planning/about-title-x-grants/statutes-and-regulations/index.html>.

⁶ See "New Restrictions Would Prevent Millions of Low-Income People from Obtaining Contraception and Preventive Care." ACLU (Mar. 7, 2019), available at <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/nfprha-cedar-river-clinics-and-aclu-challenge-trump-administrations-harmful-changes-0>

⁷ See Testimony of Gretchen Raffa, MSW on H.B. 5005, An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021 (Feb. 21, 2020), available at <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2020/APPdata/Tmy/2020HB-05005-R000221-DPH-Reproductive%20Services-Planned%20Parenthood-Raffa.%20Gretchen-TMY.PDF>.