

# KARI A. SWANSON

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

My name is Kari Swanson. I live in North Haven. I am submitting my testimony 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.

In the spring of 1999, I finished graduate school at Southern Connecticut State University and promptly lost my university-provided health insurance. I had several part-time jobs but did not qualify for health insurance from any of my employers. Privately purchased health insurance was out of the question for financial reasons and I certainly could not have afforded out-of-pocket costs to see a gynecologist in private practice. Fortunately I was able to afford to have my well-woman visit and pap smear at one of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England's locations.

It was a nurse at Planned Parenthood who found the discrete lump in my breast that was eventually determined to be benign. But not everyone has access to affordable preventive care and some of those who do not are not as fortunate to have benign conditions. Some of those who do not have access to affordable preventive care will die, because they will not find out about their life-threatening conditions until it is too late. One of my Aunts died from Stage IV uterine cancer because where she lived (not in Connecticut) she did not have access to affordable reproductive health care. She delayed seeking medical attention for her symptoms until it was a dire emergency by which time it was too late to save her life.

All people need and deserve equal access to comprehensive health care, including sexual and reproductive health care, because health care is a human right. No one should be forced to choose between other basic needs and potentially life-saving preventive health care. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England provides free or low-cost birth control, testing for sexually transmitted infections, and cancer screenings. Please

support S.B. 274 and help Planned Parenthood of Southern New England to continue to provide critical health care services to tens of thousands of Connecticut residents.

Thank you,  
Kari Swanson  
North Haven