

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

My name is Mercy Yalartai, I am from West Haven. I am a former intern of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England.

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.

While interning for Planned Parenthood I was able to see firsthand the immense care and support for communities that are often forgotten or invisible in our current healthcare system. Offsetting the funding for family planning providers would allow for continued robust care and access to affordable birth control and cancer screenings.

Additionally, health care is a human right and all people need and deserve equal access to comprehensive health care, including sexual and reproductive health care. 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. 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. If we are committed as a society to making sure the people within the margins have a right to quality healthcare, as the people who are hypervisible and do not have to fight for access to their human right, then we must offset the funding to organizations like Planned Parenthood and other family planning providers who provide lifesaving care.

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,

Mercy Yalartai  
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