



Emergency Request to Block Title X Rule Filed in Maine

After a nationwide block of the Gag Rule was lifted yesterday, the Center for Reproductive Rights is asking a court in Maine to re-block the rule

06.21.19 (PRESS RELEASE)—Today, the Center for Reproductive Rights asked the District Court of Maine to immediately block the Trump Administration’s [Domestic Gag Rule](#). The Rule had been blocked nationwide in March, but yesterday, a federal appeals court granted the administration’s request to stay the preliminary injunctions issued by lower courts.

The emergency request in Maine to re-block the rule was filed on behalf of Maine Family Planning (MFP)—the state’s sole Title X grantee and the largest reproductive health care organization in Maine. If enacted, the rule could eliminate up to 85% of abortion clinics in the state of Maine, with all but one of MFP’s 18 clinics being forced to cease abortion services.

“The Trump Administration is seeking to shut down abortion access and gag healthcare providers from discussing abortion options with their patients,” said **Nancy Northup, president and CEO of the Center for Reproductive Rights**. “Allowing this gag rule to go into effect will also close family planning clinics, leaving low income communities with limited options and in many cases no healthcare at all. We’ll be back in court today with an emergency motion seeking an immediate injunction to stop these devastating consequences.”

“In Maine, where we grapple with poverty, substance use disorder, and a largely rural environment, Title X clinics have long played a key role in alleviating barriers to health care access,” said **George A. Hill, President and CEO of Maine Family Planning**. “The Gag Rule would wreak havoc across our statewide network and on comprehensive reproductive healthcare across the country. We will do everything we can to block this Rule.”

The Domestic Gag Rule will:

- Force healthcare providers that receive federal funding like MFP to stop performing abortions, even though no federal funds are used to finance abortion.
- Prohibit doctors at these facilities from making referrals to abortion providers, even when the patient has already decided to have an abortion and directly asks for a referral.
- Force doctors to give all pregnant patients prenatal referrals, even when the patient doesn’t want one.
- Give Title X funding to non-medical organizations known as “crisis pregnancy centers”, which are designed to look like medical clinics but aim to deter women from getting abortions.

The Title X program was created nearly 50 years ago to ensure low-income Americans can afford birth control and other reproductive healthcare. Each year, the Title X program provides approximately 4 million low-income patients nationwide with affordable birth control, STD testing and treatment, cancer screenings and more. In fact, **60% of women get their usual medical care from a Title X-supported healthcare center**. In Maine, 23,800 low-income people receive Title X services every year.

For decades, existing regulations have prevented federal funds, including Title X, from being used for abortion services. The Domestic Gag Rule goes far beyond that, forcing clinics to stop performing abortions altogether, enact prohibitively expensive physical separation requirements or lose their funding for other services, which would put many out of business.

This case was filed by Emily Nestler, Molly Duane, and Arielle Humphries with the Center for Reproductive rights, along with Emily Ullman and Jennifer Saperstein with Covington & Burling LLP, and Richard O'Meara with Murray Plumb & Murray.

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