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**Reproductive Health Patients, Providers
Support Speaker Gideon's Bill
to Sustain Strong, Statewide Family Planning Network**
Press conference and public hearing TOMORROW, February 13, 2020

AUGUSTA – To maintain the state family planning network that provides affordable birth control and other essential sexual and reproductive health services to more than 23,000 patients each year, family planning providers, advocates, and patients will join Speaker Sara Gideon for a press conference at the **State House Welcome Center at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 13** in support of [LD 1613](#), the Speaker's bill to fund the state family planning system after the loss of federal Title X funds.

Last year, Speaker Gideon [supported](#) Maine Family Planning's decision to withdraw as the statewide grantee from the Title X National Family Planning Program due to enforcement of the medically unethical Domestic Gag Rule. The Gag Rule makes it illegal for any provider in the Title X program to tell patients how or where to access abortion, and imposes cost-prohibitive and unnecessary "physical separation" restrictions on health centers that provide abortion care—moves that pushed safety-net reproductive health care providers out of the Title X program.

LD 1613 would replace lost Title X funds with state funds in order to sustain Maine's existing family planning network.

Speaker Sara Gideon

Regardless of where you live or what you earn, access to evidenced-based reproductive health care and family planning is essential. The Domestic Gag Rule forced qualified providers out of the effective Title X National Family Planning Program last year, jeopardizing health care services for 23,000 Mainers in underserved and rural communities. As a result, Maine's strong, statewide family planning network is left with a significant financial shortfall.

These clinics offer preventive health services that result in a healthier Maine and, for some patients, is the only medical care they receive. The refusal to comply with a backwards policy from the Trump-Pence Administration was the right decision. Now it is our turn to do what is right.

My legislation restores funding to Maine's family planning network and allows providers to continue offering the affordable, accessible, and high-quality health care thousands of Mainers are counting on.

George A. Hill, President and CEO, Maine Family Planning

This bill ensures not one Mainer loses access to basic health care as a result of the misguided, unlawful Domestic Gag Rule. Our patients rely on us for affordable, accessible, high-quality birth control and other services that empower them to follow their dreams and control their reproductive lives and futures. LD 1613 allows us to make good on our promise to them, and to all Mainers who depend on the strong, statewide family planning network: Our doors are open and we're here for you.

Nicole Clegg, Vice President of Public Policy, Planned Parenthood Maine Action Fund and Planned Parenthood of Northern New England

The Trump-Pence administration's medically unethical gag rule forced providers like Planned Parenthood out of the Title X program -- jeopardizing care for millions of patients across the country and thousands of Mainers. But Maine is not Washington. Thanks to leaders like Speaker Gideon, our patients' right to health care could be protected, and Mainers can continue to count on high-quality, non-judgmental care from trusted providers in their communities.

The statewide family planning network comprises 50 health centers:

- 18 Maine Family Planning clinics
- 4 Planned Parenthood of Northern New England health centers
- 5 school-based health centers
- 23 Federally Qualified Health Centers

These providers offer services regardless of patients' ability to pay, ensuring equitable access to basic sexual and reproductive health care for all Mainers. The network serves more than 23,000 patients each year, providing contraceptive counseling and supplies, STI testing and treatment, cancer screenings, wellness exams, pregnancy tests and comprehensive options counseling, and other essential health services.

Following the press conference, **a public hearing on the bill will begin at 1 p.m. on Thursday, February 13 in room 220 of the Cross Office Building.**

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[Maine Family Planning](#) provides reproductive health care at 18 clinics statewide, as well as reproductive justice advocacy and comprehensive sexuality education for all Mainers. For nearly 50 years, MFP served as statewide grantee for Title X National Family Planning Program.

[Planned Parenthood Maine Action Fund](#) is an independent, nonpartisan, not-for-profit membership organization formed as the advocacy and political arm of [Planned Parenthood of Northern New England](#) in Maine. Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE) operates four health centers in Maine serving more than 12,000 patients a year and provided more than \$4 million in free and discounted health care.