

**Testimony of Katie Rutherford, Executive Director, Frannie Peabody Center
LD 1613 An Act Regarding Women's Health and Economic Security
Before the Joint Standing Committee on
Health Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services - February 13, 2020**

Madam Chair Sanborn, Madam Chair Tepler, and Members of the Health Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee: My name is Katie Rutherford and I am submitting testimony in support of LD 1613. I am a woman, a patient at Planned Parenthood of Northern New England and have called Maine home since 2005. In 2008, determined to start a career in the non-profit sector and make a difference, I moved to South Africa to start a small organization in a rural village. I lived overseas for four years, returning to the states once or twice per year to quickly raise money for the organization, and pick up waitressing shifts to keep myself financially afloat. With no health insurance, Planned Parenthood was the only form of healthcare I could afford to access, thanks to their sliding-fee scale. I had my annual exam, cancer screening, accessed birth control, and was able to speak to a compassionate, patient-centered medical professional about any health concerns I had.

I'm also writing today as the Executive Director of Frannie Peabody Center, Maine's largest community-based HIV/AIDS services organization. In addition to wrap-around care for individuals living with HIV/AIDS, we perform free, confidential HIV and Hepatitis C testing services to over 750 individuals annually. As one of the staff members certified to perform tests, I can assure you every one of those individuals is referred to a family planning clinic, federally qualified health center, or similar local low-barrier provider for further clinical services. We work in partnership with these agencies in the event clients report sexual assault, are in need of emergency access to post-exposure prophylaxis, or require confirmatory blood tests. In almost all cases, these individuals lack the resources to access basic healthcare services beyond those affordable agencies; the same position I remember being in just fifteen years ago.

I urge you to support LD 1613 as it provides family planning clinics as well as federally qualified health centers with the resources and capacity needed to deliver critical services to Mainers who often have no other resource to turn to for basic healthcare needs.